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# THE HERITAGE OF TYRE



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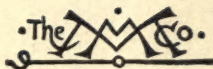
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*OUR NATIONAL PROBLEMS*

**THE HERITAGE OF TYRE**





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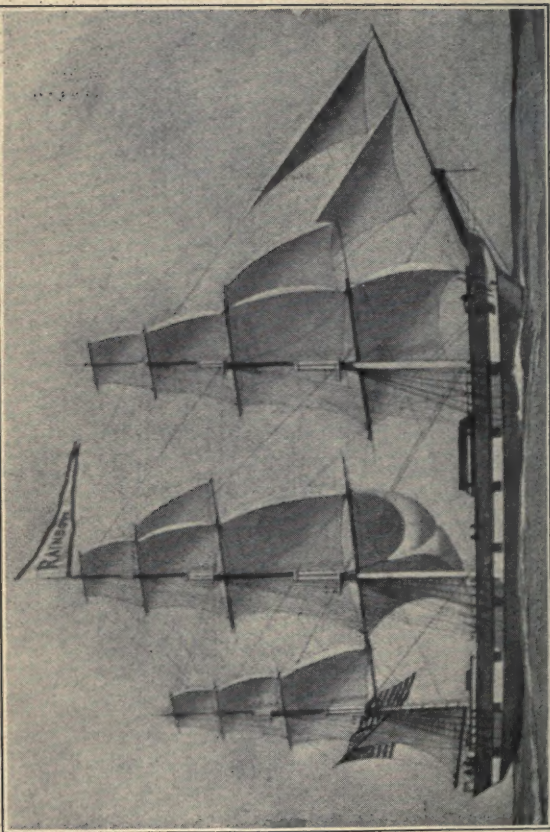
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The American ship *Rainbow*, of New York, the first true clipper and the founder of the great fleet that made the United States Mistress of the Seas.

— From a watercolor owned by *The Submarine Signal Co.*



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# THE HERITAGE OF TYRE

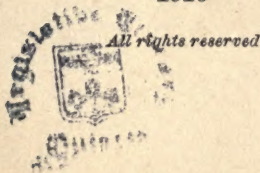


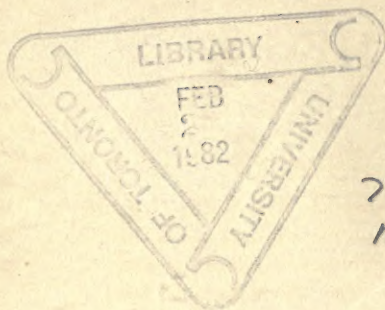
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BY

WILLIAM BROWN MELONEY

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1916





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## Dedication

To the memory of John Willis Griffiths, whose genius revolutionized the science of merchant shipbuilding and naval architecture and enthroned the United States as Mistress of the Seas. From his poet's brow the peerless American clipper leaped full blown to make a starred banner the talisman of a world's commerce. The twin and triple-screw greyhounds of to-day are the posthumous children of his dreams. Ocean conqueror by sail and by steam, he sleeps as he died, unhonored and unsung — forgotten by a heedless people even as they have forgotten the sea heritage through which they achieved their national existence.



# THE HERITAGE OF TYRE

## CHAPTER I

*And they shall take up a lamentation for thee and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of sea-faring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants!*

— EZEKIEL 26 : 17.

SINCE the day that the first man straddled a log and, with an animal's skin or the pelt of one of his own kind for a sail and a horny, spatulate foot for a rudder, started humanity adventuring by sea, the intervening centuries have beheld the occurrence of only seven nations possessed of sufficient genius to dominate the earth's deep waters.

During two thousand two hundred and forty-eight years, Tyre has had but seven true heirs.



And the United States of America, whose national existence measures no more than an hour's space in that great scheme of time, is one of these.

The estate of Tyre — civilization's estate in the seas — was founded by Phœnicia. Before Solomon knew the taste of Sheba's lips, Phœnicia's galleys had taken toll of the far coasts of the Red Sea and India. Through her use of the sea and her skill in the ways thereof she reared a small and insignificant principality on what is now the Syrian coast of the Mediterranean into a power which ordered the affairs of the entire ancient world.

Tyre, her principal port, was the inspiration of all commerce. Irrespective of nationality, all who trafficked by sea were called "Merchants of Tyre" and all vessels of burden "Ships of Tyre." As later, for a time, all roads were to lead to Rome, so all sea routes led to Phœnicia's capital.

Dynasties lived by grace of Tyre's credit and died at the calling of her loans.

At a frown from her counting rooms nations trembled and kings beat their breasts ; at a smile such a city as Carthage was born.

Tyre, dying by the death thrust of Rome, left her estate untrammelled and without entail. Carthage and the Greeks divided it, but brought it no increase and little glory. Still Carthage possessed enough of the spirit of Tyre to enable it to overshadow Corinth and Athens, and until 146 B.C. maintain itself as the principal port of the Mediterranean.

With the passing of Carthage and the subjugation of Greece the estate descended to Rome. But Rome chose to spurn the heritage and to live by virtue of the sword alone. Supremacy by blood and iron, not by commerce, was the law of her life. And as she lived by the sword she perished by the sword.

The first true national heir of Tyre was Italy. In the fifth century she entered upon the estate to hold it for the longest period in the history of its descent.

She ruled the seas for seven hundred years as absolutely as Phœnicia.

Suddenly at the beginning of the thirteenth century a strange and unexpected heir appeared and set up a claim to participation. This claimant was The Hanseatic League, a composition of the ports of the North and Baltic Seas, which sought collectively a commercial security that individually they had found it impossible to obtain. Italy resisted; but hopelessly. She was a house divided against herself. Venice, Genoa, Florence, and Naples, lacking a common inspiration and purpose, hating one another, jealous of one another beyond understanding, arrogant and self-sufficient, were forced to a partition. The Hanseatic League took the commerce of Northern Europe for its share and left that of the Southern part to Italy.

Soon Portugal forced a division of Italy's half. But it took her a hundred years to establish herself as a true heritor. Once the estate was in her

hands, however, she increased it for the first time. She added to it the Canaries, the Azores, Madeira, Zanzibar, and a definite knowledge of the continental limits of Africa.

Next in line of succession came Spain to transmute a flat world into a sphere and for nearly two hundred years make it quake at her monarch's footfall.

A heritage, fattened now beyond the wildest dreams of Tyre, it descended to Holland, whose sea skill had been nurtured under the protection of the Hanseatic League.

But hardly had Holland won control than a new heir arose — an heir that would not be gainsaid; that would not be content with a division — an heir that must have all and took it.

This was England. In her hands the Phœnician trident became a magic wand. A handful of islands burgeoned into such an empire as Rome might have been had she worn her sword more in its sheath. Britain became Great Britain,

London a second Tyre and Bristol another Venice.

Yet in a moment when Britain was never so great, never so powerful, a new people — a people whom the family of nations barely deigned to notice, claimed co-heirship. Denied by Britain, life itself was not too much to hazard to prove the claim.

In the eyes of an astounded world the United States established her birthright in the freedom of the seas as no other heir of Tyre had ever done. She wrested the Tyrian trident from Britain's grasp; tore the proud title of Mistress of the Seas from her breast.

And having done this she flung her heritage away like a witless wastrel — with the abandon of a drunkard.

To-day, although rich to wantonness, a power whose influence in the destiny of the human race is immeasurable, our starred flag is a curiosity beyond the precincts of our continental shores and insular holdings. We speak to other



nations across the oceans by permission of their several lines of communication, not our own. Except in a few inconsequential instances our mails move by alien will and the grace of alien flags. By sea our commerce is paralyzed, a spurned beggar of ships; by land, a fettered and embargoed trafficker. A hundred million strong we boast of freedom and are deaf to the echo that proves it no more than an empty mouth-ing. The United States is a vassal on the seas where only six and fifty years ago she was an enthroned and peerless monarch.

Yet in this hour of humiliation an opportunity to recover our sea heritage stands forth — an opportunity born of half a world at war — such an opportunity as, in all likelihood, will never present itself again under similar circumstances. We are at peace, we have the necessary maritime genius, we have in abundance the natural resources to found and maintain a merchant marine. Either

wit shall seize this opportunity forthwith or else our sea folly of the past will continue a hostage to the future to be delivered only, if at all, by the edge of a crimson sword.

## CHAPTER II

*And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise.*

— EZEKIEL 26 : 12.

NO nation can endure half free and half slave commercially any more than it can socially. In the sixties we had to prove for ourselves the social side of that theorem in the hell-fire of fratricidal strife. Since 1914 nearly a half of the rest of civilization at death grips has been proving the commercial equation.

No sooner had the United States burst the bonds of physical slavery fifty years ago than she supinely submitted herself to the gyves of a commercial serfdom equally as intolerable. We freed a section only to enslave the whole commonwealth. No hour, no day has passed since then that has not beheld the forging of

some new rivet, some new link in the shackles. In this year of 1916 the United States, without a merchant marine, bereft of ships, is more than half the slave that she was in 1861. What boots it that labor is free if the products of its industry and enterprise are denied their markets?

Turn where one will and it is to behold the evidence of this vassalage. Leave any one of our gluttoned seaports, with piers and warehouses and freight terminals burdened beyond capacity by an immovable commerce, and follow the railroad lines into the interior, across the continent, go North, go South, go East, go West, and there is not a mile that has not a chapter to contribute to the tale. All of the conceivable products of a hundred millions of people lie along those steel arteries arrested by embargoes. What moves is what the warring nations choose to buy and will receive from the railroads at tidewater. All else must abide its time or rot; for as Europe controls the

world's deep-water tonnage, so our market is limited to her will. It matters not that there are other markets in which we could sell and intrench ourselves to the advantage of future trade and expansion. We haven't the ships to reach them.

Turn from the railroads and go into the orchards of the West and North West and it is to find the fruit of last season matting the earth against the shaking down of the worthless crops of the coming one. Harken for the sound of ax and saw in the lumber regions of Oregon and Washington and California and harken in vain. An army of labor stands idle; its accumulated product lies shipless in gorged outports. Nor are there cars to move a cutting for domestic use. The Middle West and the South are utilizing the rolling stock of our rails as granaries and warehouses, and New England's depleted forests, the conservations of twenty-five years, are being slaughtered to supply the needs of the eastern seaboard. Better had the Middle West



and the South, during the half century that they have been spurning the sea and milking the national treasury for pinny-poppy post offices, the deepening of impossible creeks and waterways and pork-barrel appropriations for armyless army posts, built granaries for their wheat and corn and warehouses for their cotton.

Turn from field and plain and orchard and forest to the manufacturing centers and it is to find the same paralysis of industry, for industry lives by import as well as by export. Here a factory stands silent because it cannot get tin from England; there a silk loom lies manacled because it cannot obtain the raw product from China. As Britain controls her shipping so does Japan control hers. Japan has but to say to her merchant marine, "Our ships will carry Japanese exports from December to May and imports for Japanese consumption only from June to November," and that is sufficient. The rest of the world may

whistle. What is true of those two nations is likewise true of all others.

As this is being set down comes news that Britain is promulgating an Order in Council prohibiting among other things the importation of automobiles for private use, fruit, musical instruments, cutlery of all kinds, hardware, yarns, chinaware, fancy goods, and even soaps. And it is explained that this is being done, not as a matter of policy, but because of a shortage of ships; that Britain must have American wheat and corn and meat and that other things cannot be permitted to take up the space of her vessels. Yet wheat and corn and meat and munitions of war are but a part of American commerce.

At peace and neutral though we are, belligerency in the present situation could exact no more of us.

## CHAPTER III

*O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea,  
which art a merchant of the people for many isles.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 3.

IN the beginning the habitat of the people of the United States was of necessity confined to a narrow strip along the Atlantic seaboard. With limited agricultural interests they naturally turned to the sea, first as an important source of food supply and then gradually as an outlet for their energy and spirit of enterprise. Wood was the world's common and only known ship-building material. The vast and then apparently inexhaustible forests of hard and soft woods of the new land provided a wealth of it. The colonists could build vessels cheaply and quickly.

As early as 1607 a sea-going craft was launched on the Kennebec — the

*Virginia*, "a faire pinnacle of thirty tonns." She crossed the Atlantic in safety.

In 1713 Gloucester launched the world's first schooner. The word originally was spelled *scooner*. Scoon was a term used in New England of that time to describe the skittering of a stone across a water surface. As this vessel left the ways a spectator of the launching shouted, "Oh, see how she scoons!"

"A scooner let her be!" declared Captain Andrew Robinson, her builder, who had been put to it for a word to describe her peculiar native fore and aft rig.

In 1762 a shipbuilder at Bath, William Swanton by name, constructed a vessel to the order of a Scotch owner in Dundee. This craft, *The Earl of Bute*, was the first ship built in the United States. In this case the term ship is used in a specific and not a generic sense.

*The Earl of Bute* marked the beginning of contract shipbuilding in the United States and founded the industry that was to make Bath famous unto this generation.

The fact, however, is of more than historical interest. It illustrates, or rather demonstrates, one of the two fundamental and inexorable laws which determine any nation's possession and maintenance of a merchant marine — the ability to build more cheaply than competitors. In a word, the other law is the capability of operating more cheaply or upon an equality with competitors.

Swanton, of Bath, got the *Bute* contract from the canny Scots owner, not because he could turn out a better vessel than the British builders of the time, but because his command of material exceeded theirs and he could undercut their price. And until the dawn of the day of iron this economic advantage stood in favor of American shipyards.

But the tale must be whipped on. In 1769 the United States launched three hundred and eighty-nine vessels of 20,000 tons' burden. Striking an average gives fifty-one tons plus to a bottom. While the total number of vessels testifies



eloquently to the thriving condition of shipping enterprises, their individual smallness affords a most accurate commentary on the state of marine architecture in that period. The world had not progressed much beyond the cockleshell stage.

Still in that year of 1769 the United States had already bred a purple-blooded, iron-corpuscle tribe of sea-goers who recognized no peers on salt water — and who admittedly had none — men who were as ready and capable of conquering the treacherous North Atlantic in a Jew's raft or an open shallop as in a taunt and decked ship. It was nearly a century afterwards before the art of shipbuilding rose to the plane of their genius.

A Jew's raft was a cargo of lumber bound together with chains in the semblance of a vessel's hull and rigged according to necessity. In this fashion American sailors of the middle eighteenth century were wont to wallow lumber across the Atlantic to the ports of Europe.

Britain's laws forbade the exportation of colonial products in any other than British bottoms. A Jew's raft could not be called a ship, nor yet a bottom. It was bottomless. It was beyond classification, beyond nationalization, and thus Yankee intrepidity circumvented the mother country's unjust restrictions and Yankee thrift saved the freight money that otherwise must have gone into British pockets.

But this daring traffic in the North Atlantic represented only a single phase of American exploitation of the seas. The whaling industry had come on apace. The United States ruled it. American whalers had snatched it out of the hands of the English and Dutch. Our blubber hunters fretted the uttermost waters of the hemisphere in pursuit of their prey. Their success was an aggravation of British jealousy. The saving of the whaling industry to Britain's control was one of the chief reasons urged by Edward Burke in pleading with the British government to conciliate the colonies.

Said Burke of our whalemén, addressing Parliament on March 22, 1775 :

“While we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson Bay and Davis Strait ; while we look for them beneath the Arctic circle, we hear they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the Antipodes and engaged under the frozen serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting place in the progress of their victorious industry.

“Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that while some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries, no climate that is not a witness to their

toil. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people, — a people who are still, as it were, in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.”

All in vain was Burke’s eloquence and statesman’s craft. Britain would have war. And we were not too proud to fight.

## CHAPTER IV

*The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 8.

WITH the signing of the treaty of Paris and the restoration of Peace, the Government of the United States, taking stock of its affairs, determined that forthwith it must upbuild the nation's merchant marine and nurture the shipping industry. Our ships and incomparable seamen had proven mighty forces in the years of stress. The sea was a tested and certain source of wealth and national prosperity. Washington stood at the helm of the ship of state. So ripping a chapter out of Britain's book for a guide the Congress proceeded to legislation.

On July 4, 1789, the United States enacted the first law on the subject of

shipping. A ten per cent discount of customs duties was granted on all importations entering in vessels which were wholly the property of a citizen or citizens of the United States. On July 20, another statute was adopted providing that importations of tea in vessels similarly owned should pay fifty to sixty per cent less in duties than importations in foreign bottoms. Further this act provided a scale of increased duties on tea importations in American vessels entering from countries other than those in which the cargoes originated. This made it cheaper to import teas in American ships directly from India and China on the other side of the world than from London just across the Atlantic.

Britain had ordained the Far Eastern trade a monopoly, vesting it by charter in The East India Company. The Boston Tea Party was a protest against this monopoly, a protest against the exclusion of American ships from the trade with the Orient, and not, as is popularly



supposed, a demonstration of disapproval of the stamp act. The tea party was composed nearly to a man of recruits from Boston shipping houses, whose idle tonnage lay in the harbor eating its head off.

The purpose of these tea laws was to smash the British monopoly, to seize the Far Eastern trade to American ships and to induce American owners to hold it.

The Congress, thinking it had not gone far enough, clinched these laws with a third statute, providing, 1. That American-built vessels of American ownership should pay tonnage duties of six cents a ton. 2. That American-built vessels owned by foreigners should pay thirty cents a ton. 3. That vessels both built and owned abroad should pay fifty cents a ton. 4. That American vessels engaged wholly in the coast-wise trade should pay only on a single entry a year and that an alien should pay the tax as many times as she entered a port.

Nor yet had the Congress finished. It granted a bounty of \$1.50 a ton to all deep-sea fishermen over twenty and under thirty tons and \$1.50 a ton to all over the second measurement.

Three years afterward the laws were amended to add a ten per cent tax over and above the regular customs duties on all importations under foreign flags.

The result of this legislation was to give the American merchant marine an impetus that was no less than magical.

On December 31, 1789, the United States had 123,893 tons of shipping in deep-water commerce, which was carrying seventeen per cent of the country's imports and thirty per cent of its exports. On December 31, 1794, this fleet had increased to 438,863 tons and was carrying ninety-one per cent of the imports and eighty-six per cent of the exports. Two years later the tonnage had increased to 576,733 and American bottoms were transporting ninety-four per cent of the imports and ninety per cent of the exports.

The growth of the American merchant marine during this period and up to the Long Embargo is without parallel in the history of commerce.

But Napoleon must try to throttle us, and, failing, Britain definitely forced the sword into our hands.

And again we were not too proud to fight; a second time it was not too much to risk our existence to establish our birthright in the seas.

## CHAPTER V

*Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 26.

THE decision of the War of 1812 was gained through the sea, through our merchant marine, and not otherwise.

By land the British, with only a handful of trained troops, made a holy show of us. The war was over and our capital in ashes before Jackson drove home the iron at New Orleans.

But by sea our ocean-suckled tribe played ducks and drakes with the greatest water-borne power in the world. It was our merchant sailors, our whalers, our fishermen, who were the sources of the blood and sinew and skill of the navy — they who fought the guns and handed the sails of the *Constitution* and the *Lawrence* and *Niagara* as earlier they had

done those of the *Bon Homme Richard* and as later they were to serve a *Kearsarge* and a *Hartford* — they, these men-o'-peace, who had it in them to become men-o'-war overnight.

And it was this same tribe who manned the harrying fleets of privateers which did more than the navy, imperishably glorious though its achievements were, to bring the war to its sudden end.

The navy gored only the British lion, but our privateers gored Britain's pocket-book. They scuttled British commerce even within the gates of the English Channel itself.

When a balance came to be struck, American privateers had destroyed nine million four hundred thousand dollars of British shipping; the Mistress of the Seas but forty thousand dollars more of ours.

It is no wonder that British merchants and shopkeepers belabored the thick-headed ministry of the Crazy George to come to a peace.

## CHAPTER VI

*They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: They have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 5.

**D**URING the War of 1812 Baltimore and the ports of the Chesapeake loosed a fleet of privateers whose swiftness, born of a model peculiar to those waters, gave them a vicious capacity of destructiveness. They literally gutted the enemy's shipping in the Middle Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.

Up and down the Chesapeake and its tributaries these converted commerce destroyers were commonly called clippers. This designation arose from the then purely American and regional use of the intransitive verb "to clip" in the sense of an adjective descriptive of unusual speed or quickness. "To clip," as "to move swiftly" or as "with a clip," was



a term in the ancient sport of falconry, and it is easy to understand how it survived in the speech of the English, Scotch and Irish gentry who settled Maryland and Virginia. Still, long before the beginning of the second war with Britain the verb-adjective had partaken of a substantive-making suffix to describe more accurately this particular model.

The commerce of the Chesapeake and our southern coast consisted principally of trafficking with the West Indies. Britain, France and Spain reserved to their merchants marine severally a monopoly of the trade, direct and indirect, with their Caribbean possessions. But their island colonies would carry on a commerce with the near-by American coast, and the inhabitants of that coast would do business with them, the orders of crowns, councils and parliaments to the contrary notwithstanding.

To do so successfully, however, the Americans had to have vessels swift enough to elude not only the men-o'-war with

which the three ruling Powers blockaded the forbidden seas, but also the craft of the Brethren of the Coast, the pirate outfit that played surreptitious and unofficial auxiliary to the officially recognized naval forces. So the great parents of all human achievement, necessity and genius, mated and brought forth the clipper model.

These Chesapeake, or Baltimore clippers, as they came to be more commonly known, ranged in size from seventy-five to two hundred tons; in length from sixty to a hundred and twenty-five feet. It was a period of small vessels. In appearance they were low and rakish. In fact, they are the craft of the long, low and rakish description that persists to this day in a certain school of fiction. They were rigged variously as schooners, some with and some without square topsails, as brigs, hermaphrodites and brigantines. Their two masts — never more — were stepped at an extreme rake in order to give their

sails a lifting power that would minimize pounding in a head sea, and add to their ability to work to windward. This rake survives to this day in the Chesapeake bugeyes and oyster smacks, but more as a fixture of custom or tradition than for any utilitarian purpose.

Like the masts, both stem and sternpost were marked by an excessive rake. The stem joined the keel at an angle varying between thirty and forty-five degrees; the sternpost at from twenty to thirty-five degrees. The bows were high, apple round and overhanging. Thence the topsides swept aft in a graceful sheer to a narrow, low-lying stern. The breadth was out of all proportion to the length, but herein was contained the model's ability to stand a press of sail. The extreme of this breadth was located forward of the waist or midship section — practically all in the bows. The convex underbody was formed as nearly like a codfish as frames could be molded and straked. Close-hauled they

were not at their best. They were not deep and their pinched-in sterns furnished poor bearings for sailing on the wind. But, close-hauled or free, they could outfoot anything — merchantmen, frigate or ship of the line, native or foreign; and they did.

Still merchant shipbuilding in the United States, as well as abroad, was no more than a rule-o'-thumb trade. It was but a step or two beyond Swanton's time. Builders generally were no better than good journeyman carpenters, who would undertake the construction of a house quite as readily as a contract to put a ship together. With the exception of the Chesapeake no other section had evolved any type of craft that could be counted on to perform a given task in a specific manner. Naval construction occupied only a slightly higher plane. During Jefferson's Administration it had practically lapsed. It had been considered cheaper and even the better part of valor to submit to the

blackmail of pirates and the aggressions of Europe than to build ships of the line capable of upholding the national honor.

Thus far all that the United States had achieved on the deep in peace and war had been due to the daring, the surpassing genius of its seagoing tribe, and not to its shipbuilding guild.

## CHAPTER VII

*The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof  
were in thee thy calkers.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 9.

THE end of the war, the dawn of 1815, found American shipping and its corollary industries moribund — a hundred ports, from the Penobscot to the Chesapeake, choked with idle, dismantled or rotting fleets. The jellyfish peace signed at Ghent in the preceding December settled none of the issues that had brought on the two years' struggle. Britain at her pleasure was free to resume the impressment of American seamen; free to interrupt the voyages of American ships and divert them to far-distant ports for pretended purposes of search, but in reality to throttle our commerce; free to reiterate her denial of the right of neutrals to trade with the unblockaded



ports of belligerents. And, in addition, our peace — our destruction commissioners had solemnly contracted that the United States would repeal the tariff laws of 1789 and 1792.

In keeping with our convention we repealed those laws in March, 1815. The mess of pottage that we received in exchange was the admission of American ships, carrying cargoes of native origin only, to the home ports of the United Kingdom on an equality with British vessels as to customs, lighthouse, harbor and tonnage dues.

As seasoning for the pottage we were to be permitted to import British West Indian products in American bottoms, provided such merchandise was for sole domestic use or consumption. What we exported thence British ships must transport.

Besides the Roaring Forties of the North Atlantic only the direct trades, to be carried on by long and hazardous voyages, were open to us. The wreck

that remained of our once great whaling fleet — the fleet that had moved Edmund Burke to one of his noblest flights of eloquence — was free to resume its intrepid, earth-end venturing, but not as before on an equality with competitors. Britain's whaling industry was now subsidized. Yet out of this gloom, up from these ashes, "a people still in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood" was, in the space of three decades, to rise as if by magic to a dominance of the ocean sea such as no other nation, except one, has ever held since the days of Tyre. And this despite the stupidity of governments at home and political and commercial aggression abroad.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 7.

PRIOR to 1812 the East Indian trade had filled the eyes and the pockets of the New England ports, as the West Indian had filled the Chesapeake's. Ships of Portsmouth, Salem, Boston, New York and Philadelphia had early found the way to the spicy and silky coasts of the Orient. Calcutta, in 1789, saw the American flag on a vessel belonging to Salem. When Boston had had nothing else to freight thence, she sent ice, founding a trade that thrived for nearly half a century. Though the Englishman of the present may pretend to despise our preference for cold drinks, the Englishman of Clive's and Warren Hastings' times, cooped up in the ports

of India's baking coasts, paid high for the delight of freezing his pegs and tipples with Yankee ice brought from half a world away.

The East Indian trafficking was the first to be revived. With the beginning of 1816 a thrill of expansion went through the North Atlantic trade. Here we were in direct competition with British ships — a competition that was decidedly not friendly. The days of impressment were still too fresh in the minds of American seamen.

In 1817, under Monroe, we closed our coastwise trade to all foreign flags and all foreign-built vessels regardless of ownership. And marvelous to relate that law has been permitted to remain on the statute books to this day.

Presently our shipbuilders were being called on to produce larger, better and faster vessels. Some sought abroad for suggestions — turned to France. Others began studying the formation and lines of the fast-swimming deep-water fishes,

like the cod. The quest of all was to end at home with the Chesapeake clipper. The Chesapeake had been before New England and New York in learning its lesson from the finny tribe, even as it had been the first to copy what was best from the French frigates and sloops, which, during the Revolutionary War, it had seen hauled out for repairs along its shores.

Soon the north ports of the United States were launching fleets the speed and superior construction of which excelled everything else on the seas, though, given the same vessels, the British, the French and the Dutch would have accomplished no more than they ever did while Americans went to sea. The commanders and officers of our merchant service were without peers. This is not bombast, but history. Where a foreigner spread a running foot of dirty hemp or flaxen canvas, a Yankee spread a square yard of snowy cotton duck. Where a Britisher mounted nothing

higher than topgallant sails on stumpy, loglike masts, an American stabbed at the stars with lances pennoned of sky-sails and moonsails. Where the Britisher clewed up and furled, we hung on or loosed still another "kite" and sheeted it home to "*Billy Taylor*." Where each day at sunset they all snugged down to hardly more than a rag, we drove on. The night to us was as the day to them. Powerful navies protected them. Speed was our sole armament against attack.

By 1821 the fame of such "cod-headed and mackerel-tailed" ships as *The George*, of Salem, was world-wide. In that year *The George* came home from Calcutta in the unprecedented time of ninety-five days. The following season she went out in eighty-nine days! The Honorable John Company's vessels — the fleet of The United Company of Merchant Venturers trading to the East Indies — took from five to eight months in making the shorter passage to and from London. For

a generation *The George* was known up and down the sea lanes of the earth and in the ports at their ends as *The Salem Frigate*. All told, the Frigate made twenty-one successful Indian voyages, and never one in excess of a hundred days.

And in the Roaring Forties Yankee packets had seized to themselves a monopoly of that trade that was, to all intents and purposes, as practical and binding as the charter under which the Honorable John Company enjoyed its exclusive Indian privileges. The Black Ball, Red Star, Swallowtail and Dramatic Lines, of New York, Enoch Train's Line, of Boston, and Cope's Line, of Philadelphia, were the boast and pride of the nation. The comings and goings of these wind-propelled vessels were ordered as exactly as were those of their twin and triple and quadruple screw successors up to August, 1914. Fair weather or foul, they sailed as advertised. The skill of their driving



commanders had reduced a passage of terror and of from a month's to three months' duration, and frequently longer, to one of comparative luxury and a definite number of days — from fourteen to twenty. These packet ships were the master shuttles in the loom of modern civilization.

American bottoms, besides carrying ninety-two per cent of our combined imports and exports, were skimming the cream of all the trades except those in which British merchants were compelled by the protective laws of their own country to freight their goods in British vessels.

Said the *London Times* editorially in May, 1827:

“Twelve years of peace, and what is the situation of Great Britain? The shipping interest, the cradle of our navy, is half ruined. Our commercial monopoly exists no longer; and thousands of our manufacturers are starving or seeking redemption in distant lands. We have closed the Western Indies against

America from feelings of commercial rivalry. Its active seamen have already engrossed an important branch of our carrying trade to the Eastern Indies. Her starred flag is now conspicuous on every sea, and will soon defy our thunder."



## CHAPTER IX

*All the ships of the sea with their mariners  
were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 9.

RECIPROCITY was bound to come; but it was for our rivals to ask us what concessions we would make, not for us to go running to them. Still, in those days, even as now, we had shirt-sleeve diplomats and near statesmen. So a year after the *Times* uttered the plaint just quoted, Congress enacted a law throwing open our indirect trade to the world. In other words, if France would permit American ships to carry her purchases in Brazil to Havre and Marseilles, the United States would permit French ships to carry our purchases in Russia to New York and Boston.

Our rivals in Europe, with the exception of Britain, grabbed at this windfall.

The direct result during the ensuing two years was a reduction of 220,345 tons in our deep-water shipping. Concurrently with the adoption of that reciprocity act the President was authorized to open our direct West Indian trade to Great Britain on equal terms with our own merchant marine — that is, if Britain would let us carry our own goods to her possessions, without discrimination, we would let her carry and bring between our coasts and the French, Dutch and Spanish colonies on an equality with American ships.

We were not, however, to be permitted to carry a cargo from the British West Indies to the United Kingdom. Not for a moment would our near statesmen have considered standing out for such a concession as that. It was 1849 before Britain, of her own volition, granted us that privilege; but meanwhile she reciprocated in form, though not in substance. There are more ways than one of killing a cat, and British colonial officers became

artists in squeezing discriminating dues out of American shipping.

But Congress could not legislate out of existence the forests that enabled us to build ships more cheaply than the foreigners to whom it had opened our commerce. Nor could shirt-sleeve diplomacy barter away the genius of our sea-going population or our native ability to operate more economically than our competitors.

Though American officers and seamen received higher wages, their skill enabled them to sail with smaller crews. It also enabled American ships to make five voyages to foreigners' three or four. Our speed commanded better freight rates. American ships, being safe risks, enjoyed lower insurance rates. Foreigners grogged their crews. American sailors got tea and coffee — no more. Insurers offered a rebate of ten per cent of premiums on all voyages made without the use of spirits. This rebate was a regular and fixed earning of American vessels.

## CHAPTER X

*And thou wast replenished and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 25.

**B**ETWEEN 1830 and 1836 the American merchant marine increased twelve and three fourths per cent a year, while the British increased only one and one half per cent. It took a parliamentary investigation, brought on by a very much alarmed Mistress of the Seas, to establish those figures and something else besides — that the commanders and officers of American ships were “generally considered to be more competent as seamen and navigators, and more uniformly persons of education, than the commanders and officers of British ships of a similar size. . . the seamen more carefully selected and efficient.”

That reference to ships of similar size pointed particularly at the packet service, but the committee that made the report might very well have included every branch of our deep-water shipping.

American commanders and officers in foreign commerce were recruited from the flower of the country's youth and manhood. Not a few were college men; the majority graduates of home-town academies corresponding to our present-day high schools. They were sons of builders, masters, owners, merchants and professional men. They began their careers not in forecastles but at the counting-room desks and in the warehouses of the firms or individuals for whom they were destined to command vessels.

Before they ever put foot on deck to start their lives at sea they possessed a grounding in the arts and craft of commerce and at least a working familiarity with another language—usually French; often both French and Spanish. They



went to sea to become commanders and ultimately owners and merchants. When they attained the quarter-deck of their first command, a good many before they were twenty-one years old and most of them before they were twenty-five, they either bought a share of the vessel or a share was given to them. It was to their own advantage that their ships should do well by their owners.

On the other hand, British masters and mates, with the exception of those in the aristocratic service of The Honorable John Company, were hornyhanded forecastle graduates, who picked up what education they could while working and fighting their way aft from the hawse-pipes to a poop deck habitat.

Let a Britisher, W. H. Lindsay, author of the "History of the Merchant Shipping," bear witness:

"During the first half of this century (19th) the masters of American vessels were, as a rule, greatly superior to those who held similar positions in English

ships, arising in some measure from the limited education of the latter, which was not sufficient to qualify them for the higher grades of the merchant service. American ship owners required of their masters not merely a knowledge of navigation and seamanship, but of commercial pursuits, the nature of exchange, the art of correspondence, and a sufficient knowledge of business to qualify them to represent the interests of their employers to advantage abroad. On all such matters the commanders of the English ships, with the exception of the East India Company, were at this period greatly inferior to the commanders of the United States vessels."

## CHAPTER XI

*Many isles were the merchandise of thine hand :  
they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and  
ebony.*

—EZEKIEL 27 : 15.

FOUR years after the British Parliament had given our commanders and officers a certificate of character and competence America's merchant venturers had become the lords of the ocean sea. And complacence and conservatism, the first begotten children of conscious success, had become the gods of our shipbuilding industry.

So no small sensation resulted when, in the spring of 1841, a young New York draftsman, named John Willis Griffiths, at a meeting of the American Institute in that city, submitted in so many words that perhaps American shipbuilders and designers did not know so much as was generally supposed. He attacked the

predominating theory that it did not matter how roughly a vessel entered the water so long as she left it smoothly behind her — the theory exemplified in the Baltimore clipper's full round bows, practically flat forward floor and narrow stern.

He proposed a model of a knifelike, concave entrance, melting into an easy run to the midship section, where, instead of forward, he located the extreme breadth of beams. Thence this fullness or breadth melted again into the after end in lines almost as fine as those forward. In place of the codfish underbody he gave his innovation a dead rise amidships that marked him at once in the estimation of the shipbuilding fraternity as hardly less than a lunatic. A vessel of that sharpness could not possibly stand up alongside a pier, let alone under sail.

The following spring Griffiths, nothing daunted by his previous reception, appeared again at the Institute, this time to exhibit a model that embodied in

detail the revolutionary theories he proposed. The few who deigned to notice him did so only to suggest that Smith & Dimon, his employers, would better get such a dangerous person out of their drafting room. Stephen Smith and John Dimon were important builders of North Atlantic packets. Their yards at the foot of Fourth Street were among the largest that then stretched for two miles along the East River.

Griffiths' employers, however, found it to their advantage not to discharge him, and during the rest of that year he delivered a series of lectures on ship building and architecture, the first ever given on this side of the Atlantic. And finally he succeeded in interesting William Aspinwall, one of New York's China-trade princes — the same Aspinwall who was to build the Panama Railroad and give his name to the town, now Colon, that stands at the eastern gate of the Canal. In the spring of 1843 Aspinwall signed a contract with Smith & Dimon to build

him a ship of seven hundred and fifty tons according to Griffiths' designing.

On the morning following the signing of that contract the New York newspapers reported the occurrence as though it were a scandal of the first importance. If the Rector of Trinity Church had decamped with the Sunday-school funds his fall from grace would have achieved no more space or prominence. But New York in those times was interested in everything that pertained to ships and shipping. It must be remembered that it was the leading port — the gateway of a nation made great by ocean traffick-ing. Whoever counted for anything then in its scheme of things — commercially, politically, socially — was linked to the sea in some way. Ship news was important news.

Therewith began a controversy that was to rage for two years round Griffiths and his ship. It should have taken not longer than four or five months to build the vessel. It took nearly twenty-four.

"Built against the laws of Nature," said the shipwrights as she began to take form on the stocks.

"She'll have her insides where her outsides ought to be," said sailors, marking the appearance of the concave entrance and run in place of the convex lines with which they were familiar.

"The American shipbuilding industry will be disgraced," said the rulers thereof.

Everybody must needs try to have a finger in the pie, too. Aspinwall and his partner, Howland, nicked by the ridicule and abuse visited on Griffiths and indirectly on them, were continually suggesting changes — urging compromises, modifications. But it was for them and their friends to suggest and give advice, and for Griffiths to go on building according to the plans originally approved. He had staked his reputation — his all — on that vessel, and she was going to be built as he had designed or not at all. He was a gray-eyed, dreamy-browed fellow in his early thirties; but, for all



his poetic exterior, there was iron in his blood.

At the last Aspinwall sent to England for a masting plan. For some inexplicable reason he had come to believe that the English knew more about rigging a vessel than Americans. When the foreign plan was received and delivered to the young draftsman, he buried it in his inside pocket. It was years afterward before Aspinwall learned that Griffiths had disregarded the British plan.

## CHAPTER XII

*Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; they have made thy hatches of ivory well trodden.*

—EZEKIEL 27:6.

SO it was not until a cold and cheerless morning in January, 1845, that the *Rainbow*, whose keel had been laid nearly two years before, was ready to leave the ways. And whoever was anybody in New York that wintry forenoon fongathered in the Smith & Dimon yards. Launching parties were the fashion of the town, and Aspinwall & Howland had a princely reputation as hosts on such occasions. But more than their invitation was responsible for society's turning out in such inclement weather. Like the shipbuilding fraternity, society expected to have a bit of a Roman holiday — expected to see a dreamer and rainbow chaser brought to grief and perhaps

killed. Griffiths was going to be launched with his ship, and the morning newspapers, taking their last fling at him, predicted that five minutes after leaving the ways the *Rainbow* — “a dreamer’s rainbow” — would be lying on the bottom of East River.

As she cleared the ways the *Rainbow* careened as if about to fulfill the predictions of her critics and her designer’s enemies. The crowd caught at its breath. Thumbs were turning down, when, of a sudden, the *Rainbow*, with the grace of a swan, straightened up on the bearings of her red-coppered underbody and cheated her audience of the smell of blood. There was little cheering, because few there believed in Griffiths. He was one with Galileo that day.

“Well, she didn’t capsize,” said some in disappointment.

“Time enough for that when she gets to sea,” whispered others.

“She’ll never be heard of again, once she clears the land,” added a croaker.

"She'll never clear *land*," there was some one else to laugh, making a play on the name of John Land, who had been chosen from among the Aspinwall & Howland captains to command her.

And the crowd ate and drank and made merry, and, perforce, toasted the ship moored in the ice-choked river, and at the end of the customary festivities of a launching turned away into the town, feeling cheated. They had gathered to see a ship capsize, and, though ignorant of it, they had been privileged to see the founding of a fleet which was to make a starred banner the talisman of the whole world's commerce.

The *Rainbow* sailed in February for China. She was back home again in September to reward her owners with two hundred per cent over what she had cost. Ready for sea, she had stood Aspinwall & Howland about twenty-five thousand dollars.

"We met no ship, American or foreign, that doesn't know the looks of her heels,"

reported Land in pride. "The vessel will never be built that can beat her."

The *Rainbow* cleared again from New York on October first, China-bound. As month after month passed, bringing no word of her, South street lugubriously began to nod its head. She would never be heard of again! But suddenly one April morning, in the midst of a croaking chorus of I-told-you-so's she romped in past Sandy Hook. There was a very good reason why nothing had been heard from her. She carried the news of her own arrival at Canton!

Land had taken her out in ninety-two days against the northeast monsoon — that is, he had been compelled to beat up the treacherous China Sea against a head wind — and jumped her home in eighty-eight days! Six months and fourteen days for the round voyage, and three weeks of the time consumed in discharging and loading! The *Rainbow* was a national sensation; and John Griffiths, a dreamer, might have been a hero, but

he was not of the stuff which plays that kind of part.

Like the colorful phenomenon after which she was named, the *Rainbow's* life was not long. She is supposed to have been lost off the Horn in 1848, while under the command of another master than Land. Still, she crowded into her short existence five successful voyages, or as many as the ordinary vessel was capable of making in a similar number of years.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Purple and scarlet from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.* — EZEKIEL 27 : 7.

NO sooner had the *Rainbow* proven herself than Aspinwall & Howland commissioned Griffiths to design another clipper, the *Sea Witch*, for Bob Waterman, one of their captains who had been making their house flag famous by his driving performances in an old flat-floored cotton wagon called *Natchez*. In the week of the *Rainbow's* launching Waterman sailed from the Island of Patoe, near Macao, rounded the Cape of Good Hope thirty-nine days out, crossed the Line in the Atlantic on the sixty-first day, and took a pilot off Sandy Hook — 13,955 miles, and seventy-eight days and six hours from his port of departure! The year following Waterman brought the *Natchez* home in



eighty-one days. On neither occasion did Waterman know a contrary wind, but he was a driver *par excellence*, a graduate of the North Atlantic packet service, where sheets were padlocked and halyards racked to prevent faint hearts from shortening sail when an officer's back was turned. And in view of such passages as the *Natchez*', a vessel of accepted design, it may be readily understood why Griffiths in the beginning had met with such resentment and opposition.

The launching of the *Sea Witch* was not the drab affair that of the *Rainbow* had been. The *Rainbow* had stirred New York's pride, and, as if to make amends, the city gave the second Griffiths clipper such a send-off as few merchant vessels had ever received in that or any other port. She was about one hundred tons larger than the *Rainbow*. Boasting a golden dragon for a figurehead, she cleared Sandy Hook on Christmas Eve, 1846, the tallest ship afloat. Under all sail she spread more canvas than a

seventy-four-gun man-o'-war of thrice her tonnage. Though she did not equal the *Rainbow's* passage out to China — she was one hundred and four days to Hong-Kong — she came back in eighty-one days; the next year in seventy-eight days; again in seventy-seven; again in seventy-nine, and once from Java Head in seventy-three days. Her passage of seventy-seven days from China to New York has yet to be beaten under sail.

Meantime all the important China houses of Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore had been compelled to adopt the Griffiths design in order to hold their own against New York in the tea trade.

In all of these ports fleets of flyers were on the stocks when the announcement of the discovery of gold in California threw the country and the shipping world into a furor.

## CHAPTER XIV

*They hanged the shield and helmet in thee;  
they set forth thy comeliness.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 10.

THE overland route to California was long and beset by the menaces of Indian warfare and the terrors of desert crossings. The Panama route was unknown. The shortest and safest, though the longest in mileage, lay round Cape Horn. And so to the tea clippers that could make their way to the West in the quickest possible time the droves of gold-seekers turned.

Then, as now and as has been previously indicated, our protective laws seized this coast-to-coast trade — a deep-water voyage though it is — to American-built and American-owned vessels. Freights rose as high as a dollar and a half a cubic foot, or sixty dollars a ton of forty cubic feet. Who controlled a

bottom capable of doubling Cape Stiff had a fortune in his grasp. A ship of a thousand tons, costing fifty thousand or sixty thousand dollars ready for sea, paid for herself and as much as twenty-five per cent in addition on the outward passage. Most of the important family fortunes that are household words in the Eastern cities of the United States were founded in that time. Railroading and manufacturing have augmented them, but clipper ships started them.

For every yard to-day on the Atlantic Coast there were thirty then. Builders speeded up until they were turning out ships of doubled and trebled size in from a quarter to half the time it had previously taken them. The great *Staghound* was built inside of nine weeks. Another instance of this speed construction is known to the writer in connection with the beginning of the firm of Glidden & Williams, whose flag was to rule long in the California trade. Glidden happened to be in California at the time of the gold

discovery, and, foreseeing the demand for transportation that would result, he hurried East overland, obtained financial backing from his friend Williams and gave an order for the building of two ships. These vessels, which were to continue in service for more than a quarter of a century, were launched sixty days from the signing of the contract. Thirty days afterward they were both outward-bound with general cargoes at forty dollars a ton.

But hardly had the first clipper set sail for California when Great Britain, driven to desperation by her decadent and shrunken mercantile marine, threw overboard her ancient protective system, repealed her navigation laws and bade the world welcome to do her carrying. The California clippers accepted the invitation, and British ships were to lie idle in the ports of the Far East, willing and anxious to take London and Liverpool charters at thirteen and fourteen dollars a ton of fifty cubic feet, while

skysail-yard Yankees loaded and departed at forty dollars a ton of forty cubic feet, and received a premium of as much as five and six dollars a ton in addition. Britain's new order of things permitted her merchants and owners to buy and build vessels wherever they pleased. But more about that in a moment.

The first flyer to be sent along the course of fifteen thousand miles between Sandy Hook and the Golden Gate was the *Memnon*, of New York. She cut the time of the passage, which had previously taken from six to nine months, to one hundred and twenty days!

This record was still warm when Griffiths' *Sea Witch* galloped out in ninety-seven days! The *Sea Witch* was to shine but a little while. *Flying Cloud*, an East Boston ship and a 'creation of Donald McKay, the Rembrandt of American builders, seven months afterward eclipsed her star forever.

On August 31, 1851, the *Flying Cloud* dashed through the Heads of San Francisco

eighty-nine days out from New York! It is the sailing-ship record to this day, a second time equaled by herself, and a third time in 1860 by the clipper *Andrew Jackson*.

This entry appears in *Flying Cloud's* log for July 31: "Distance run this day by observation three hundred and seventy-four miles. During squalls eighteen knots of line were not sufficient to measure the rate of speed."

Translated, that means an average of fifteen and six seventeenths knots an hour for twenty-four hours. Not until 1874 was an ocean-going steamer to attain a fifteen-knot speed. For four consecutive days, earlier in that passage, this queen averaged thirteen and a half knots, and for twenty-six consecutive days nine and three-eighths knots.

Wherever the terms of mile and knot are employed herein they are to be understood as meaning the sea measure of 6080 feet, not the statute mile of 5280.



Another Boston-built vessel to distinguish herself among the pioneers was the beautiful *Surprise*. By beating the *Sea Witch's* time twenty-four hours, she caused about twenty thousand dollars of known wagers to change pockets. From San Francisco the *Surprise* cut across the Pacific, loaded tea for London at eight pounds a ton, and in less than eight months paid her owners a profit of fifty thousand dollars over and above her cost of construction and all expenses of operation.

Before the *Surprise* reached England, however, the *Oriental*, belonging to the same New York house — A. A. Low & Brother — had created a sensation that was to determine history. The *Oriental*, a brand-new ship, was the first American vessel to land a cargo of tea in London after the repeal of the navigation laws. She had brought this cargo home in the then incredible time of ninety-seven days. She was the first out-and-out clipper London ever saw. Illustrations of her

were printed broadcast through England; she became the subject of newspaper leaders, adjuring Britishers to take a lesson from her or prepare to forsake the sea.

The British Admiralty copied her lines while she lay in dry dock. Afterward the lines of other Yankee flyers were taken off similarly, but the *Oriental* was the first inspiration of Britain's builders, who, though they were to launch many beautiful cracks, never succeeded in producing one to vie with American champions. The fastest sailing vessels that Britain or any other foreign nation ever owned were built in or purchased from the United States.

## CHAPTER XV

*They traded in thy market wheat of Minnith and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 17.

THE first British fruits of the *Oriental's* inspiration were two tea clippers, *Chrysolite* and *Stornoway*. So keen was the national spirit of rivalry that when, on January 3, 1852, the *Illustrated London News* published an article claiming that the *Chrysolite* and *Stornoway* had beaten the little *Memnon*, an immediate challenge was the result.

The American Navigation Club of Boston, through its president, Daniel Carpenter Bacon, owner of the *Gamecock*, challenged "the shipbuilders of Great Britain to a ship race, with cargo on board, from a port in England to a port in China and back, for ten thousand pounds a side."

This challenge not having been taken up at the end of thirty days, the Navigation Club announced its willingness to increase the stake to twenty thousand pounds, or a higher sum if agreeable.

This likewise failed to draw fire; but not long afterward *Chrysolite* and *Stornoway*, and a dark horse, the *Challenger*, got a drubbing that shut up their followers for a long time. The two formed part of the homeward tea fleet of 1852, which included the Americans, *Witch of the Wave*, of Salem, *Challenge* and *Surprise*, of New York, and *Nightingale*, of Boston, named in honor of Jenny Lind.

*Witch of the Wave*, which got away from Canton at a most favorable period of the northeast monsoon, backed her maintop-sail for a pilot off Deal ninety days out!

*Stornoway*, *Challenger* and *Chrysolite*, sailing with a diminished monsoon, arrived out in one hundred and nine, *one hundred and thirteen* and one hundred and six days respectively.

*Challenge*, *Surprise* and *Nightingale*, sailing at practically the break-up of the monsoon, made the passage in one hundred and five, one hundred and six and one hundred and ten days.

The times speak for themselves. It was claimed for the *Challenger* that she cleared from Shanghai, and not Canton, thus adding to her mileage. But so did the *Nightingale* and under less favorable conditions, and beat her by three days. The Americans got eight pounds a ton that year, the highest freight ever paid for tea, and the English bought the *Challenge*.

The following season the *Challenger*, arriving out in one hundred and ten days, hoisted a broom to her foretruck, having beaten out *Nightingale* and *John Bertram*; but her triumph lasted only until she warped into dock. There lay the *Architect*, of Baltimore, which had come home in one hundred and seven days. London had been drinking *Architect's* tea for a week previously and had already chartered her for the next year

at an advance over the English fleet of two pounds a ton.

All this while no less a rivalry was going on in the California trade. Speed was the ruling spirit of the hour. No vessels cleared together or within a week of each other from the Golden Gate or the ports of New York and Boston that were not the subject of racing wagers. Such ships as the *Sovereign of the Seas*, *Westward Ho*, *Cleopatra*, *Radiant*, *Phantom*, *Whirlwind*, *Simoon*, *Winged Racer* and *Red Rover* had been launched.

The *Sovereign of the Seas*, another of Donald McKay's East Boston triumphs, was electrifying the nation with her performances. On her first passage out, after losing fore and main topmasts and foreyard off the Horn, a damage that took fourteen days to repair, she entered the Golden Gate one hundred and three days out from New York. Donald McKay's brother, Lauchlan, commanded her. Homeward bound, she made history.

Loading sperm oil at Honolulu, she sailed on February 13, 1853. From noon on March 15 to noon of the 16th she flung three hundred and ninety-six miles behind her; during the next twenty-four hours, three hundred and eleven; the next, *four hundred and eleven*; the next, three hundred and sixty — or at the rate of nearly fifteen and a half knots an hour for the four days. During the run of the eighteenth she averaged seventeen and one-eighth knots an hour, and beyond any doubt she must have logged at times twenty or more. And this record was to stand but a few months.

The *Sovereign* arrived off Sandy Hook May 6, 1853, eighty-two days out from Honolulu. She sailed again on June 18 for Liverpool, crossing from pier to anchorage in thirteen days, nineteen hours, and from the Banks of Newfoundland in five days, seventeen hours. In a week she outsailed by three hundred and twenty-five miles the Cunard



steamer *Canada*, which left Boston on the day of her departure from New York. The *Canada's* best day's run for the passage was three hundred and six miles; the *Sovereign's*, three hundred and forty-four.

The *Sovereign's* eighty-two days from Honolulu went down in a match race between the *Contest*, of New York, and the *Northern Light*, of Boston. They sailed from the Gate, twenty-one hundred miles farther from New York than the Hawaiian port. The *Northern Light* arrived off Boston Light in seventy-eight days and five hours; the *Contest* off Sandy Hook in eighty days. And while Boston was shouting itself hoarse in celebration of this victory over its rival city, the *Comet*, of New York, clipped two days off the *Northern Light's* record. The *Comet* was another Yankee flyer that the English bought. They rechristened her the *Fiery Star* and made her an Australian passenger liner.

## CHAPTER XVI

*The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 25.

“God bless her wheresoe’er the breeze  
Her snowy wings shall fan,  
Beside the frozen Hebrides  
Or sultry Hindostan !

“Where’er in mart or on the main,  
With peaceful flag unfurled,  
She helps to wind the silken chain  
Of commerce round the world.

“Her pathway on the open main  
May blessings follow free,  
And glad hearts welcome back again  
Her white sails from the sea !”

SO Whittier sang of a Yankee clipper. The theme of Longfellow’s “The Building of the Ship” was Donald McKay’s *Great Republic* which was turned out at East Boston on October 4, 1853. Boston made a public holiday of the

launching of the *Great Republic*. She was the most powerful as she was the largest clipper ever built. She was rigged as a four-masted ship, square on fore, main and mizzen and fore and aft on the jigger, and was the original of that type which later the British came to denominate as a four-masted bark and for which some Americans coined the word "shipentine." But any vessel square rigged on three masts is a ship, no matter how many additional sticks she may step; and not a bark or a shipentine.

Donald McKay designed the *Great Republic* to be the fleetest thing the sea should ever know and sparred her accordingly. Her fore and main lower masts were each three feet eight inches in diameter; the mizzen three feet four inches. From partners to truck — that is, from the deck to the extremity of the skysailmast pole — the mainmast measured nearly two hundred and five feet. The main yard was one hundred and twenty feet long and two feet four inches in diameter

at the tye. Still the *Republic* provided a balance for this enormous rig. She registered 4555 tons.

But deep water was never to behold the *Great Republic* just as she sprang from her master builder's brain. She was badly burned alongside of a New York pier while loading for her maiden voyage. Practically rebuilt and entirely re-rigged, although still retaining four masts, she finally went to sea under the house flag of A. A. Low & Brother, of New York. She now registered 1198 tons less than when launched. What she might have done in her original glorious form may only be conjectured from these two performances: On her first passage she crossed the North Atlantic in thirteen days and later ran out to San Francisco in ninety-two days, within three of the *Flying Cloud's* record.

France employed her as a trooper in the Crimean War and during the Civil War she served our country in a similar capacity.

The *Great Republic* was truly a great ship and one would rather she had found her end under her native flag. The British bought her, rechristened her the *Denmark*, and in 1872 lost her in a hurricane off Bermuda.

## CHAPTER XVII

*Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 18.

UPON the discovery of gold in Australia, American yards began building for that trade. Donald McKay took the lead, beginning by selling to English owners the *Sovereign of the Seas*, which during the eleven months that he had owned her earned him two hundred thousand dollars. The *Lightning* followed her, and on her maiden crossing from Boston to Liverpool made a run of four hundred and thirty-six miles in twenty-four hours — a steady average of eighteen and one-sixth knots an hour, the longest authenticated day's distance ever covered by a wind-propelled vessel.

What was happening aboard the *Lightning* on that memorable day, March 1,

1854, the initiate and the uninitiate, too, may imagine with this abstract of her log before them :

“Wind, south. Strong gales; bore away for the North Channel; carried away the foretopsail and lost jib; hove the log several times and found the ship going through the water at the rate of 18 or  $18\frac{1}{2}$  knots; lee rail under water and rigging slack.”

Lee rail under water and rigging slack, forsooth! Aye, all hell popping alow and aloft and a breed that knew no fear chucking the devil under the chin. She was probably sporting royals. Those who know will agree with me in the conjecture that the *Lightning* at various times during that day must have logged upwards of twenty-two knots.

It was not until 1889, thirty-one years afterward, that an ocean-going merchant steamer exceeded that day's work. The *Lightning*, three years afterward, was to come within six miles of her own



record, when, as an Australian Black Ball liner, running her easting down, she made four hundred and thirty miles.

There is a legend that credits the clipper *Flying Scud*, of New York, with the greatest day's work ever accomplished except by a modern Trans-Atlantic express steamer. According to this legend the *Flying Scud*, in 1855 or 1856, on an eighty-day passage from New York to Melbourne ran four hundred and sixty miles or at a sustained average speed of nineteen and one-quarter knots an hour from noon to noon. For twenty years the writer has been trying to authenticate this legend. Many are of the opinion that some admirer of the ship projected an unusual day's work into the measure of land or statute miles. Assuming this to be so and four hundred and sixty to be statute and not nautical miles, the *Flying Scud* ran three hundred and ninety-nine and nine-nineteenth miles, or at a sustained average hourly rate of sixteen and one-half knots plus! Could the legend as it stands be

established in fact, the little town of Damariscotta, Maine, that gave the *Scud* to the deep sea, might not be without honor in the land.

Foremost among the lines striving for supremacy in the Australian trade were the White Star, the same that is plying the Atlantic to-day, and James Baines' Black Ball Line.

To meet the advantage gained by the Black Ball's possession of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, the White Star chartered the American clippers, *Chariot of Fame*, *Blue Jacket* and *Red Jacket*, the last, one of the few great Maine-built greyhounds. The *Chariot of Fame*, a McKay ship, went out to Melbourne from Liverpool in sixty-six days; the *Blue Jacket*, out in sixty-seven and home in eighty-nine.

During the next two years the Donald McKay yards contributed to the Australian Black Ball fleet such wonder ships as the *Champion of the Seas*, *James Baines* and *Donald McKay*, and the *Japan* and *Commodore Perry*. All were

record breakers; the *Lightning* and *James Baines* the most famous. The *James Baines* ran in twelve days and six hours from Boston Light to Rock Light, Liverpool; the *Donald McKay* from Boston to Cape Clear, Ireland, in twelve days, making a record twenty-four hour run of four hundred and twenty-one miles.

On her first voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne the *Lightning* did no better than the *Sovereign of the Seas* — seventy-seven days; but on her return passage she hung up the record of sixty-three days, making a run of three thousand, seven hundred and twenty-two miles in ten consecutive days and doing four hundred and twelve miles for her best day's work. On this voyage she carried five million dollars in gold and dust.

The *James Baines*, sailing on December 9, 1854, on the same passage, logged four hundred and twenty miles during a sixty-three day run. She came home in sixty-nine days, thus sailing round the globe in one hundred and thirty-two days.

The *Baines* was a marvelous ship, as let her log of an Australian passage in 1856 bear witness :

“June 16th : At noon sighted a ship in the distance ahead ; at 1 P.M. alongside of her ; at 2 P.M. out of sight astern. The *James Baines* was going 17 knots with main skysail set ; the *Libertas*, for such was her name, was under double-reefed topsails.”

“June 17th : Lat. 44, S., Long. 106 E., ship going 21 knots with mainskysail set.”

This is the highest authentic sailing ship record.

During the Sepoy mutiny the *Baines*, *Lightning* and *Champion of the Seas* were chartered as troopers by the British government. The *Baines* and *Champion* ran out to the Hooghly in one hundred and one days ; the *Lightning* in eighty-seven days, beating the entire transport fleet, including a large number of auxiliary steam vessels.

Besides the ships mentioned, the Brit-

ish used in the Australian trade the American cracks, *Red Rover*, *Comet*, *Tornado*, *Sierra Nevada*, *Invincible*, *Belle of the Sea* and *North Wind*. While they were shuttling back and forth between England and the island continent, the *Mandarin*, *Flying Scud*, *Nightingale*, *Whirlwind*, *Flying Dutchman*, *Panama*, *Snow Squall* and *Ringleader* were equaling their records in the trade between New York and Melbourne.

It must be kept in mind that during all this brave, glorious period the clippers represented but a small part of merchant shipbuilding, not only in this country but also in Great Britain. There were other trades, and profitable ones, wherein cargo-carrying capacity came before speed. Our shipping engaged in foreign commerce had increased from 943,307 tons in 1846 to 2,268,196 tons in 1857. And, though the evening of our greatness was on us, this total was to go on increasing up to the outbreak of the Civil War, when our total tonnage — river,

lake, coastwise and deep water — amounted to 5,299,175 and Britain's, including her colonies and dependencies, to 5,710,968. American deep-water tonnage alone amounted to 2,642,628; and, besides participating in the business of the world, American ships were carrying seventy per cent of our exports and sixty-five per cent of our imports.

The United States was the Mistress of the Seas. Ship for ship — clipper or ordinary merchantman — the United States dominated the commerce of the world; but as 1857 was the evening of the clippers, so it was the afternoon of our merchant marine in foreign commerce. The following year saw the cessation of the postal subsidies the United States had been paying for a decade to maintain the starred flag on the North Atlantic in competition with Britain's subsidized Cunarders. The day of iron had dawned and we were not prepared for it, either economically or politically.

Still for the moment it is not with



steam that we are dealing, but with the ships of sail which moved on their occasions by the grace of the earth's free breezes and not a propeller's thrust. Right up to the beginning of the war they kept their place in the eye of romance. It was in 1860 that the *Andrew Jackson* equaled the *Flying Cloud's* eighty-nine-day passage to San Francisco. Bath launched the last American wooden sailing ship, the *Aryan*, in 1892.

But on the day Grant faced Lee at Appomattox the night of American clipper ships was already far advanced. The majority of them had passed by purchase to alien flags. The few that remained to us were to finish their lives for the most part in the coasting trade, like worn-out, broken-winded thoroughbreds that one sees at times in the shafts of a city milk wagon.

The writer remembers one, the *Dashing Wave*, as a lumber drogher on the Pacific Coast. Twenty years ago he saw a round shot cut out of her stern



transom, where it had been implanted during the war by one of the Confederate commerce destroyers. But there was nothing in the *Dashing Wave's* appearance then to suggest that she had ever possessed the fleetness to show her heels to an *Alabama* or *Florida*. Her back was hogged; her tall rig cut down to bring it within the handling power of ten men before the mast — a fourth of the crew she had been wont to carry in the days when she was young and romance really sailed the seas.

John Willis Griffiths lived to become one of America's foremost naval architects, and long enough to see the white-winged ships of his youth's dreaming become no more than a memory among his fellow countrymen. He died in New York in his seventy-third year. Ancient Greece would have ranked such a genius with men like Archimedes. Rome would have voted him riches. If he had been a Britisher, Westminster Abbey would be his resting place and

English school children would know his fame and weave garlands on his birthday. But he was an American, and he is forgotten save for a few lines in an occasional encyclopedia.

Gone is the clipper, with her studding sails and skysails and moon sails and ring-tail spankers and Jamie Greens and jib-o-jibs; gone the tribe of peerless mariners that fretted the uttermost seas with her spurning keel. No more than a painted ship on a painted ocean remains of the great merchant marine they created.

Still, that painted ship is a challenge in this hour of a helpless and hampered commerce — a challenge to a nation to remember its sea heritage and resume the independence on the waters of the earth which it once risked existence to establish.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*The east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 26.

AT six o'clock of the morning of September 4, 1807, American genius made steam navigation a fact in the destiny of civilization. In that hour and on that day Robert Fulton's *Clermont* waddled out of Paulus Hook Ferry, New York, and headed up the Hudson River on her first trip to Albany.

On May 26, 1819, the *Savannah*, the first steamship that ever navigated deep water, set out from Savannah, Georgia, for London. She arrived in the Thames twenty-five days afterward to be viewed with amazement and also the distrust that was ever ready at that time for anything emanating from the United States.

The *Savannah* was a New York ship-rigged packet of about three hundred

tons, fitted with an horizontal engine and propelled by paddle wheels which could be hauled aboard in heavy weather. She went from London to St. Petersburg and returned home successfully, but only to have her engine removed and to be restored to the ranks of sailing tonnage.

There for nineteen years ocean steam navigation was to remain dormant and until, as Lindsay says, "Britain had to take up the new ship or abandon the seas." When the *Savannah* made her remarkable and historical adventure, the dreams of the majority of men trafficking by sea were of such stuff as hempen cordage and snowy royals and skysails and not of steam chests and pistons and horsepower. John Willis Griffiths was only ten years old.

It was in 1838 that the British inaugurated their steamship traffic in the North Atlantic that eventually was to restore them to supremacy on all the seas. That year witnessed the foundation of the Cunard Company under the

inspiration of the British Admiralty; 1840, the beginning by the Cunard Company of a fortnightly mail service between Liverpool, Quebec, Halifax and Boston with a subsidy of sixty thousand pounds.

In the same year the British Government granted The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company a subsidy of two hundred and forty thousand pounds a year to carry on a West Indian mail service, and immediately afterward entered into similar contracts with The Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company for a service to Gibraltar and India and with The Pacific Steam Navigation Company for a service to the West Coast of South America.

This last-mentioned company was a result of a promotion of an American, William Wheelwright, sometime United States Consul at Guayaquil, Ecuador. Nobody in this country would listen to him and he was driven to England with his dream. And never has Great Britain turned a deaf ear to any voice that

promised extension of her commerce or the aggrandizement of her sea power.

Britain breathed the breath of life into these lines with a political as well as a commercial purpose. In peace they were to be the links of an ever living chain to bind her possessions beyond the seas to the mother country; in war, a bulwark of defense. All of the ships were constructed under Admiralty supervision. They carried naval officers as custodians of the mails and they were bound by contract to be available to government upon call.

With the appearance of the first Cunarder an agitation began in the United States to appropriate forthwith a million dollars annually for mail transportation in home-owned vessels, *steamships preferred*. It was realized that something must be done to counter this British stroke against our North Atlantic packet lines and, American-like, the spending of a million dollars was the first achievement that suggested itself to the popular

imagination. We have yet to learn that that proverbial million dollars of ours, undirected by constructive thought, is as futile as the million of soldiers, that not a few of our countrymen believe can be mustered in arms between a setting of the sun and a rising thereof.

Five years passed before this feeling crystallized and found expression in legislation. The self-sufficiency of the shipping industry was in a great degree responsible for this delay. The barons of the winds held a broad and openly expressed contempt for England's teapots and teakettles, as it pleased them to call the Cunarders. There was no cheaper power than wind, American ship-owners believed, and they contended it would take their packets and clippers whither they wished to charter them quite as swiftly as steam would or could the ships of Britain or those of any other nation. Just as naval experts clung to the opinion that wooden walls and not iron, and, later, steel ones were best for



men-o'-war, so the Yankee lords of the ocean sea believed they were justified as they watched their sailing ships outdistance "foreign steam" on every hand, and heard the world singing as late as 1854:

There's a saucy, wild packet, a ship of great fame;  
She belongs to New York and the Dread-  
nought's her name.

She's bound to the Eastward, where stormy winds  
blow —

A Liverpool packet — Lord God, see her go!

Oh, the Dreadnought's a-sailing the Atlantic  
so wide,

With blue water boiling white along her lee  
side.

With a bone in her teeth she is racing away  
To beat the Cunarder a week and a day!

By 1845 a school of opinion of wider national vision than the shipowners had formed, and the Congress adopted its first law directed toward meeting the competition of British steamships. This act authorized the establishment of contract lines for carrying the United States mails abroad. In 1846, under a

second law, a five-year contract was entered into with the Ocean Steam Navigation Company for a bi-monthly service between New York, Havre and Bremen by the way of Cowes. The contract provided a payment of \$100,000 a ship annually for the German route and \$75,000 a ship for the French one. Further, the company, within a twelve-month, was bound to build four first-class steamers of not less than fourteen hundred tons "with greater speed to the distance than is performed by the Cunard Line between Boston and Liverpool and back" and to be held available and transferable for naval use in the event of war.

Britain's answer was to increase the Cunard subsidy to eighty-five thousand pounds, which, in 1841, she had raised from sixty to eighty thousand.

In 1847 the Congress passed a third law on the subject, providing for the establishment of steam mail services between New York and Liverpool; New

York and New Orleans via Havana to the Isthmus of Panama; Panama to the then territories of California and Oregon; and Charleston and Havana. The declared objects of this act were "to provide efficient mail services, to encourage navigation and commerce and to build up a powerful fleet in case of war."

The contract for the New York-Liverpool service was let to Edward K. Collins, head of the famous Dramatic Line of packets, and his associates, and provided:

1. That the contractors should build, under supervision of the Navy Department, five wooden, copper-sheathed steamships of not less than two thousand tons and one thousand horse power.
2. That the first ship should be ready to be commissioned eighteen months after the signing of the agreement.
3. That each ship must carry four passed midshipmen as watch officers and a mail agent approved by the Postmaster General.
4. That a semi-monthly mail serv-

ice should be maintained between New York and Liverpool during the spring, summer and autumn and a monthly service during the winter season. 5. That the Secretary of the Navy should advance to the contractor \$25,000 a month on each of the five ships from the time of their launching to the date of completion and commission. 6. That the Government should pay to the contractors for the maintenance of the service \$385,000 a year or at the rate of \$19,250 each for twenty round voyages a year.

The contract for the New York-New Orleans-Havana-Panama service was let to A. G. Sloo, of Cincinnati, who transferred it to a group of New Yorkers. With these three exceptions it coincided with the North Atlantic agreement: 1. That the contractors should build five wooden, copper-sheathed ships of not less than fifteen hundred tons. 2. That these ships must be commanded by naval officers of not less than the grade

of lieutenant. 3. That the Government should pay the contractors \$290,000 a year.

The contract for the Pacific service to California and Oregon was let to Arnold Harris and provided for a monthly carrying of mails from Panama north in three steamers of not less than one thousand tons. So The Pacific Mail Steamship Company was born.

The Charleston-Havana service was given a postal subsidy of \$45,000 a year.

The Bremen-Havre line began operation on June 1, 1847; the Pacific line on October 6, 1848; the New York-Panama line in September, 1849; the Collins line on April 27, 1850.

The Bremen service was never satisfactory. It was abandoned in 1851. The ships were unspeakably slow. The Havre service was maintained until 1857, the English port of call being changed from Cowes to Southampton.

From the jump, however, the Collins liners, *Atlantic*, *Pacific*, *Baltic* and *Arctic*,

designed by John Willis Griffiths, carried the starred banner to the fore in competition with the British and kept it flying there until the end. They assumed a place in the national affection and in popular imagination co-equal with the clipper ships.

Out of hand their splendid equipment and, considering the time, luxurious accommodations, enabled them to command the cream and bulk of the passenger traffic. The Cunard line cut passenger rates. The Collins line countered by beating the best British crossing by a day. The Cunard line cut freight rates from seven pounds ten shillings a ton to four pounds. The Collins line increased its lead to a day and a half.

"Carry freight for nothing if you have to do it," the British premier is quoted as having said to the Cunard people.

"Anything to beat the damned Yankees!" became the slogan of the British and with the closing of 1851 Great Britain increased the Cunard subsidy to \$843,000 for forty-four trips a year.

The competition had been a losing game for the Collins Line. That day and a half had, during the year, cost nearly a million dollars in fuel, wear and tear and up-keep. An appeal was made to the Congress for an increase of support. The subsidy was raised to \$33,000 a voyage or \$858,000 a year.

The line continued to maintain its lead, but with no increase in earning advantages. Its administration has been called extravagant. Extravagance is a relative equation to be interpreted always by surrounding circumstances of necessity and time. Under the schedule to which those wooden vessels were bound, not only by contract but also by national pride, they barely had time for repairs at terminals. Never in the history of any merchant marine have ships been driven as were those old paddlers. They held to their schedule regardless of every circumstance, and they carried all who could find berths in them, but the freight went to the slower and cheaper Cunarders and irregular packets.



With a fleet of cargo steamers to supplement its express ships the Collins Line would have been a dividend payer, but it never got its nose far enough above water to invest in exclusive freight tonnage. Sail, not steam, was the magnet of capital.

The line suffered a terrific blow in September, 1854, through the loss of the *Arctic*, which, rammed by a Frenchman in a fog, went down off Cape Race with three hundred and seven souls. Next, in 1856, the Congress served notice that in the following year it would reduce the subsidy to the original sum of \$19,250 a voyage. On the heels of this, on September 23, 1856, the *Pacific* sailed from Liverpool never to be heard of again. In 1857, during the financial panic that shocked the world, Collins and Company failed.

In 1858 the Congress abandoned the postal-naval subsidy system and adopted a scheme of payments for mail carriage under which American ships received

the inland postage plus sea postage and foreign ships the sea postage only.

The South, which had taken the lead in voting to establish lines through postal subsidies, had now come to a right-about face. Its representatives in the Congress were opposed to further increase of the North's possession of potential instruments of war. Except for the firing on Sumter the Civil War had already opened. The Collins Line disappeared from the seas in 1859. Its *Adriatic*, the fifth and last ship of the fleet to be built, was sold to the British and for years afterward added to English glory and English earnings in the North Atlantic trade.

Thus the United States triumphed in steam navigation as she had in sail and thus she laid aside the laurels. Like a banderlog people we climbed the tree and shook down the coconuts for strangers to gather.

## CHAPTER XIX

*And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships and stand upon the land.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 29.

**D**URING the decade of fierce competition on the North Atlantic brought to a close by the Civil War the British had definitely turned to iron as a cheaper material of construction than wood. They had at last been compelled to realize that their one hope of regaining supremacy on the seas lay in upsetting the economic advantage that the United States possessed in producing wooden vessel property. So in those years England was learning to build iron ships, learning to get into them line by line something of the fineness and beauty of the American pine hulls, overcoming a myriad of difficulties, training workmen,

acquiring craft, even as we have come to do since 1914. Perhaps, most important of all, she was developing the marine engine and applying screw propulsion.

It is a commonly popular belief that it was the Civil War that dealt American shipping the blow from which it has never recovered. That is not so. It was the change from wood to iron and later to steel and the unpreparedness of this country for that change.

Upon the declaration of peace the American merchant marine had shrunk more than one half—to be exact, fifty-three per cent—but not through physical destruction. Great Britain had purchased 801,311 tons, other flags had absorbed practically half that amount, the War Department 757,611 tons and the Navy Department 215,978 tons. The Confederate commerce destroyers sank only 104,605 tons. Yet during the four-year war period the shipbuilding industry had declined in an even greater proportion. It was no more than a shell,

and a wooden shell at that, in 1865. American iron ship products were about as shapely as boilers. We were the veriest tyros in working the metal.

In the meantime, big units of capital that had been derived from maritime interests, realizing that the day of iron and steam had come, that our navigation laws forbade building abroad and that the United States was not organized or prepared to construct the new ship economically, were won away from the sea. Railroad construction, the development of iron, coal and oil lands and manufacturing were the magnets. Internal development had set in. The great new West was calling.

What capital turned back to the sea still resisted the idea of steam's taking the place of wind; and the few that did not resist held that sidewheels were superior to screws for propelling ocean-going vessels. In 1866 the United States was actually attempting to compete in the North Atlantic with wooden paddlers!

By this time John Willis Griffiths had produced the first twin screw steamer, the cruiser *Pawnee*, and was preaching the adoption of triple screws and the attainment of twenty-knot sea speed. And in 1843, twenty-six years previously, it had been an American warship, the Princeton sloop, that had shown the world the application of the propeller!

In 1864 the policy of subsidizing mail steamships was revived. Under a treaty with Brazil the United States granted \$250,000 a year and the South American republic \$150,000 a year to establish a line between Philadelphia and Rio Janiero. This line lasted eleven years. It simply couldn't be made to pay at the increased American cost of operation, occasioned by labor charges and high taxation, even if it had not been doomed from the beginning by the excessive charges of building its ships. The same causes fifteen years afterward killed a second Brazilian line.

The session of the Congress that revived postal subsidies repealed a law of

1813 requiring officers and crews of all public and private American ships to be citizens of the United States and limited only officers to citizenship. The shore was competing with the ocean; the land was robbing the sea of its labor; American mariners were turning to the higher wages of the internal industries and the pre-emption of Western farms and ranches.

The following year the Pacific Mail Steamship Company was granted \$500,000 a year for a monthly service (begun in 1867) to Japan and China and \$75,000 additional for calling at Hawaii.

In 1866 the bounties that had been paid to fishermen since Washington's time were cut off. And in 1869 the Congress began an inquiry as to what could be done to restore the nation to its previous important and proud position on the seas. Capital that then would have invested in steamships, could it have built them as cheaply as Britain, proposed amending the navigation laws to admit ships constructed abroad to American



registry. This meant, of course, buying the products of British yards. Capital invested in sail tonnage protested that this would drive its vessels out of business. Britain at the moment happened to be anathema. Her attitude during the war, her loosing of the *Alabama*, *Florida* and *Shenandoah* against American shipping were all matters of bitter remembrance. Passion was permitted to vote upon a question of economics. The navigation laws were not amended.

In 1871, however, a law was enacted permitting the free importation of metal shipbuilding materials. It was futile. Still the American building industry was unorganized, its labor unskilled in metal construction. The difference of construction cost in favor of Britain was not affected in the slightest degree by this law. Besides any vessel built of imported materials was excluded from our protected coastwise traffic, which meant, of course, the round the Horn passage to the Pacific states.

In 1872 the Pacific Mail was granted \$500,000 more for a second monthly service to Japan and China and for all other services the Post Office Department was authorized to pay. 1. To American carriers, "eighty cents per pound or \$1600 a ton for letters and post-cards and eight cents per pound or \$160 a ton for other articles." 2. To foreign carriers, "four francs per kilogram (about thirty-five cents a pound) or \$700 a ton for letters and postcards and fifty centimes (about four and a half cents a pound) or \$90 a ton for other articles."

That is the law to-day, except as it is affected by the act of March 3, 1891, which will be considered in its chronological order.

In 1874 the country was set by the ears by charges that bribery had played a part in getting the Congress to vote the Pacific Mail grant of 1872. As a result of the ensuing scandal it was rescinded in 1875 and two years afterward, upon the expiration of the company's contract of

1865, the direct postal subsidy system was again abandoned. Instead of hamstringing the reputations of the guilty pork-barrelers and jailing them and making the Pacific Mail Company live up to its contract, we acted like banderlogs. What we did was as foolish as it would have been for Britain to have abandoned India simply because she had found it necessary to indict Warren Hastings. Ever since that time ship subsidy, no matter what its garb, has been to American politics what the wraith of Elsinore is to Hamlet.

But mail lines alone, important and necessary naval assets though they are, do not constitute a merchant marine any more than one swallow makes a summer. Ships of burden, not ocean greyhounds, not *Mauretanas* of thirty-two thousand tons with a freight capacity of only fifteen hundred, float commerce. And America's ships of burden then were wooden vessels — wooden vessels in competition with iron and later the

cheaper and more economical steel ones and then the steam tramp — wooden vessels that deteriorated more rapidly; that cost more to maintain and insure and operate; that had to be kept up to the very highest state of efficiency in order to satisfy the requirements of Lloyd's classifications and do business.

A vessel that underwriters will insure to carry coals and not to carry wheat is of necessity limited to the coal trade. The wheat shipper is bound to employ a bottom in which he can protect his property against the perils of the sea, regardless of nationality. The limitation of a vessel's insurable risk is the limitation of her commercial value.

So down through the years to the nineties the unequal battle between wood and the winds and the metals and steam was waged. Unable to build, unable to insure, unable to raise the other fellow's standards to her own, unable to operate in competition with any other nation, the United States had to surrender. It

was cheaper to let the other fellow do it, and he was to be found in every port ready to take what we had to transport — the British, the Germans, the French, the Norwegians, the Japanese, the Italians. And for many large American industries, like Standard Oil and The United Fruit Company having a constant tonnage requirement, it was cheaper, too, to own and operate under alien flags.

Business must show profits or it is bankruptcy. Corporations must account in dividends to stockholders or perish.

## CHAPTER XX

*The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry  
of thy pilots.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 28.

IT was not until 1883, in the Cleveland administration, that the United States was awakened to the fact that it was participating in the affairs of the world under false pretenses; that, with a navy that would have been less than a good breakfast for the fleet of any one of a half dozen European nations, it was demanding universal subscription to the caveat of the Monroe Doctrine.

Eight years more were to pass before the Congress took a step toward providing auxiliaries for the navy that President Cleveland founded. Then, under an act of March 3, 1891, it practically revived the law of 1846. This law is still on the statute books and specifies four classes of vessels, conforming to Navy

Department regulations and formulæ, which may claim pay for mail carriage on the following terms:

CLASS I: Vessels of at least 8000 tons and twenty knots' speed, \$4 a mile.

CLASS II: Vessels of at least 5000 tons and sixteen knots' speed, \$2 a mile.

CLASS III: Vessels of at least 2500 tons and fourteen knots' speed, \$1 a mile.

CLASS IV: Vessels of at least 1500 tons and twelve knots' speed, \$0.6666 a mile.

And it is permitted that Class IV may be vessels of wooden construction!

Down to the present moment, and this is being written on March 22, 1916, the act of 1891 has augmented the United States merchant marine by four existing ships, not one of which is capable of claiming payment for mail services under the requirements of Class I!



Under the provisions of the act the British-built liners *City of New York* and *City of Paris* — now the *New York* and *Philadelphia* in the Trans-Atlantic trade — in 1892 were admitted to American registry, an undertaking with their owners being that they would construct in American yards two vessels of equal or greater tonnage and speed, and similarly to be held available for naval use in the event of war. So the *St. Paul* and *St. Louis*, which, five years afterward, with the *Yale* and *Harvard* (the *New York* and *Philadelphia*) were to do yeoman service in the Spanish embroglio, happened to be built.

The conditions that forebade further building at the opening of the nineties still existed a decade later. In 1901 Bernard Nadal Baker, founder of The Atlantic Transport Line and its former president — an American bred in the purple, if there ever was one — put his patriotism to proof by ordering in the United States the duplication of three

Belfast-built ships. His patriotism cost him just \$865,194, or the difference between the prices of the Irish port and the Delaware. And the American builders lost money!

It was no longer the high cost of materials that prevented the Delaware and the Chesapeake and Fore River from constructing as cheaply as the Clyde, the Tyne, the Tees and Belfast. The American shipbuilders' competitors were organized and standardized in models, in molds, in draftsmanship, in engines, in yard equipment, in patents, in all the requirements of vessel construction — organized and standardized just as twenty cities in the United States were and are organized and standardized in the manufacture of automobiles, watches, clocks, bridges, locomotives and railway equipment.

In 1909 an act, amendatory of the law of 1871, was adopted, freeing all materials imported for the construction of vessels for American registry, but limiting the

engagement of such vessels in coastwise traffic to six months each year unless upon payment of the remitted duties. This law produced no ships.

And then at last the United States in 1912 did what we ought to have done in 1864. In the Panama Canal Act it was provided that foreign-built vessels under five years of age might be admitted to American registry. But up to the beginning of the war it had brought in no ships because of the American operating cost. In the same act provision was made for the remission of canal tolls to American vessels. In 1913 this was repealed on the representations of Great Britain that it was opposed to the diplomatic understanding by which she had agreed to the construction of the waterway.

Again in 1913 there was included in the tariff bill a provision similar to the one that proved such a boon to the American merchant marine in Washington's time — a five per cent discount of

duties in favor of goods imported in American bottoms.

Thus reads the law :

“That a discount of five per centum on all duties imposed by this Act shall be allowed on such goods, wares, and merchandise as shall be imported in vessels admitted to registration under the laws of the United States: *Provided, That nothing in this subsection shall be so construed as to abrogate or in any manner impair or affect the provisions of any treaty concluded between the United States and any foreign nation.*”

On its face that statute convicts those who framed it of being lip servers and time servers, if not worse. The legislators who drew that bill did so knowing full well that it would not benefit the American merchant marine in any degree. And recognizing that fact and recording it, they nevertheless enacted it into law. They might just as well have legislated a set of rules and regulations

for the government of the rings of Saturn.

The United States is solemnly bound by treaties with every important member of the family of nations, excepting Russia. to accord their respective ships the same favored treatment as her own. We denounced our treaty with Russia five or six years ago because of her refusal to grant passports to American Jews. When the time comes to renew that treaty, and it will be renewed, Russia will not submit any more than would we, were the cases reversed, to such a discrimination against her shipping. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The Act of 1913 is futile. It has achieved no more than a presentation to the United States Supreme Court for an unnecessary interpretation of patent elements of law. It will pass into the limbo of similar legislation unless that tribunal should adopt the Teutonic dictum that treaties are no more than scraps of paper.

And that is inconceivable by a sane mind.

For all practical purposes and as briefly as it has been possible to lay it off the writer has brought the historical, political and economical record of the American merchant marine down to the stirring of the hell brew in Europe.

## CHAPTER XXI

*And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 32.

WHEN, in August, 1914, the mailed fist of Bellona fell and paralyzed the commerce of the entire world, the United States flag had descended in the ocean scale below little Norway, below Italy, even below Japan. With a foreign traffic of four and a half billions of dollars, exports and imports combined — more than one-tenth of the whole earth's business in a year — we possessed a merchant marine capable of transporting eight and nine-tenths per cent of it. We had registered for deep water only eight hundred and ten steamers of 666,593 tons gross and four hundred and sixty-nine sailing vessels of 234,616 tons gross — this out of



a total of 7,886,527 tons, which includes everything over one hundred tons that floats in coastwise, river, Great Lake and insular traffic.

Before the European War was a week old the United States began to reap the harvest of folly that it had been sowing during the preceding fifty years. And a decade hence it will not have finished garnering the sheaves of its sea neglect, assuming that forthwith it begins to up-build a merchant marine and that meanwhile it is fortunate enough to remain at peace with all the world.

By the middle of August, 1914, Americans for the first time in nearly two generations were realizing as a people, that they were dependent upon the sea. The foreigner whom, for half a century, we had been permitting to do our carrying had either quit the job or, according to the dictates of the law of supply and demand, increased his charter prices to what were believed to be impossible figures. The American ship

owner who had been left to live on the smell of a greased engine room rag or to die had no more than a drop to contribute to the suddenly emptied bucket of ocean tonnage. And his charter prices were even higher than the foreigner's, for his ships flew a neutral flag of more than ordinary significance.

Thereupon the cotton growers of the South, the wheat and corn growers and farmers of the Middle and Far West and the manufacturers of the East and New England, whose products stood arrested at tidewater, bethought themselves that they had been hearing for ever so long that American ship owners had been taking refuge under foreign flags.

There was not less than two million tons of American-owned tonnage in British registry alone. We believed this implicitly; but shipping men knew better.

"We'll get that tonnage transferred to the American flag and then let any of

the belligerents hold up our commerce and we'll show them!" we declared as with one voice.

In a fortnight we had learned the lesson that a flag has a most definite status in international law and in the schemes that the various races of mankind have reared for purposes of government and self-protection. We had learned that a neutral flag protects non-contraband goods of any ownership and that its right to traffic with belligerents is limited only by the efficiency of a given blockade; that a neutral flag having delivered a cargo in a belligerent port cannot be held good prize upon its emergence. We had also learned that a belligerent flag does not protect a neutral cargo, regardless of whether it be contraband or non-contraband. But we had not reached the million-dollar spending stage; nor yet attained to the knowledge that there are conditions in which all the gold in the world is bereft of a purchasing value.

On August 18 the Congress abated the five-year naturalization clause of the Panama Canal Act and authorized the President to throw American registry open to foreign-built ships for a period of seven years, regardless of the citizenship of officers and crews. On September 2 the President let down the bars.

Meanwhile investigation had been going on apace and before the executive order was signed it was generally known that practically no relief to American commerce was to issue from this source. It had been discovered that American citizens and corporations owned not a quarter of the two million tons popularly supposed to be in British registry and that these bottoms would simply continue to serve the requirements of particular industries and trades and not general commerce.

And now the familiar American mental state of spend-a-million-dollars was attained. But in this case it happened to be fifty millions.

"If foreigners will not come under the flag by invitation, we'll buy 'em in!" we shouted. "Pay 'em their price and take 'em! We've got the money and we'll show 'em!"

Those sentiments early in September found more formal but not more accurate expression in what was known as the Alexander ship purchase bill, proposing the creation of a Government-owned, Government-operated merchant marine. The Administration would "purchase or construct" suitable vessels. And move the nation's commerce therewith and forthwith.

It was simply history repeating itself. The Congress was living over again the days of 1845 and 1846, but with the will-o'-the-wisps of Government ownership, paternalism, socialism and most of the other isms of the interregnum for its beacons.

God knows where the fathers of that bill were going to construct their ships, with the few yards of the United States already

chock-a-block and those of the principal maritime nations given over to the necessities and demands of war and their own commerce.

As to purchasing vessels, they believed that all they had to do was pay the price and that foreigners would sell. Perhaps they had an eye on the interned tonnage of Germany. The Administration has denied that the purchase of the Teutonic liners was ever contemplated.

The Government ownership bill was passed by the House and defeated in the Senate, as it should have been. Still in November the same Senate swallowed the La Follette-Alexander seamen's bill and President Wilson approved it instead of vetoing it out of hand.

In January, 1915, Government ownership of a merchant marine was brought forward again in a Senate substitute bill, only to die in a deadlocked committee. But before this had happened, however, Great Britain very succinctly informed this Government what it might hope to expect through purchase.

In substance said Britain: "We will recognize the transfer of any American-owned vessel from British to United States registry, but we will not recognize the transfer of a vessel of any ownership unless upon indubitable proof that it is not changing registry to escape the responsibilities of war or national belligerency."

War is war, and the instinct of self-preservation is as national as it is individual.

Among the neutrals Spain, Denmark and Holland declared prohibitions of sale. Austria was the next to do so. The ship purchase bill, passed by the House, was defeated in the Senate, as it should have been. Then, late in October, Germany declared a prohibition. France followed suit early in November. Russia and Japan found it unnecessary to say anything on the subject.

By November, when the source dried up, free American registry had produced, by transfer of bona-fide native-owned bottoms and by purchase, one hundred



and sixty-eight vessels of 574,226 gross tons. Adding to this all the bottoms that it had been possible for the power of gold to draft from the Great Lakes and coast-wise fleets, and among them vessels that it is no less than criminal to permit to venture on deep water, and the merchant marine of the United States stood at the opening of 1916 increased only fifty per cent over its ocean-carrying capacity of August, 1914. In other words, we possess tonnage capable of handling only one-fifth of our commerce.

## CHAPTER XXII

*And they (thy mariners) shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 31.

UP to November, 1914, American shipowners, shipbuilders and students of shipping felt that of the war was to be born a new era of commercial independence of the United States; that the changes wrought by the cataclysm would bring native capital, so long denied to marine enterprise, back to the sea; that once more the nation through its maritime genius would be enabled to enter again into its estate in the deep waters and maintain the place and the power to which destiny has committed it.

Yet in a moment when this prospect was never so bright the cloud of Government ownership loomed out of Washing-

ton, and the La Follette-Alexander bill was passed. And five months afterward that bill, become a law by President Wilson's approval, was driving The Dollar Steamship Company, of San Francisco, back to British registry, driving The Pacific Mail Steamship Company out of business, compelling the American merchant marine to strike the flag in the Western Sea, forcing a nation to abandon its freedom of traffic with half a world — to abandon it to Japan, a people whose doors our guns opened only fifty years ago for the extension of our own and the earth's commerce!

Perry must have turned over in his grave. One can almost hear his sea warrior's spirit groaning in the anguish of humiliation.

When the tale of this period comes to be written, historians will turn in vain to current records for a single clear-ringing, nation-stirring protest against the policies of the United States which produced the events of 1915. In vain they will search

and hearken for the voice of a Washington, a Henry, an Adams, a Hamilton, a Monroe, a Webster, a Lincoln, a Cleveland, challenging the soul of a nation to be steadfast in its faith, true to its heritage and worthy of its destiny.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*And they (thy mariners) shall cause their voice to be heard against thee and shall cry bitterly and shall cast up dust upon their heads.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 30.

THE La Follette-Alexander seaman's law is a piece of class legislation; no more and no less.

From 1905 to 1909, Germany, Great Britain, France and Norway, in the order named, responding to the demands of the decade's quickened spirit of social evolution, took account of the well-being of their sea laborers by the enactment and amendment of certain legislation governing their respective merchants marine. Great Britain, Germany and France brought their seamen under employers' liability and compulsory old-age insurance laws in keeping with similar Italian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish,

Austrian and Greek legislation. Great Britain, Germany, France and Norway notably provided for improved vessel housing and sanitation and increased food scales.

The United States, during that time, the sea being beyond its people's vision, did none of those things. In the matter of housing and sanitation American vessels down to the late nineties had been models. In the matter of food, legislation was unnecessary. In fact, food quantity and its higher cost, during the half century of American decadence at sea and up to the beginning of the present war period, was one of the important items that contributed to the maintenance of the differential of operation against us; that enabled the foreigner to carry at lower rates.

It may be stated as a general proposition that prior to the summer of 1914 the food cost of an American deep-water ship ranged from fifty to sixty-six and two-thirds per cent over a foreign vessel's.

Under our living standards we necessarily had to buy more and, purchasing in home markets, we had to pay more. The exact reverse will state the foreigner's case. Under his living standards he bought less and, buying at home or in free markets as he always has done, he paid less.

A comparison between our coastwise marine and that of other nations is beside the question. The American forecastle food scale, particularly on the Pacific Coast, is as good as the officers' mess in any navy; in a number of cases superior.

As to wages in deep-water American ships they stood on a par with food over those paid by the other maritime nations. For example, it cost for labor alone \$10,464 a year more to operate a five-thousand ton steamer under our flag than in British registry. That is a specific case. In another instance of equal tonnage a transfer to American registry increased costs as follows: Deck depart-



ment from \$625.81 for nineteen hands to \$845 for sixteen; engine room and fire department from \$711.01 for twenty hands to \$1145 for twenty-two; steward's department from \$129.09 for five hands to \$220 for six.

In the first example cited the monthly increase was \$872; in the second \$744.12.

It will be marked that the engine and fire room cost exhibits the highest increase. That is due to the compulsory employment of water tenders, in this case three at a wage of \$45 each. A water tender is absolutely unknown by that name or rating in the merchant marine of any other nation. A fireman performs the corresponding duties in foreign vessels and he is a fireman — that and nothing more.

So much for a predicate.

In 1911 Secretary of Labor Wilson, then a Congressman, presented a bill at the instigation of the Seamen's Union which purported to have for its purpose an unbuilding of an American merchant

marine. Stripped naked this bill's purpose stood revealed to be the upbuilding of the power of the Seamen's Union in the protected coastwise traffic regardless of what happened to American shipping in unprotected deep-water commerce. The bill, however, passed and, in 1913, President Taft, understanding its innate class spirit of selfish rule or ruin, scotched it.

In the meantime the *Titanic* had been lost. The disaster evoked a universal demand for an extension of provisions for security of life at sea. The result of this demand was the calling by Great Britain of a congress of the maritime powers of the world, The International Convention for Safety at Sea. But taking no account of the deliberations of this congress and the equitable issue thereof La Follette revived the Wilson bill in the Senate and Representative Alexander, of Missouri, in the House, adding to its alleged purpose of "upbuilding" a merchant marine that of

safety at sea. It was passed on November 4, 1914, to become effective as to American vessels one year from that date and as to foreign shipping one year from the date of its approval by the President. Mr. Wilson approved it on March 4, 1915.

Summarized, the La Follette-Alexander law's salient provisions are: 1. That American seamen in foreign ports and foreign seamen in American ports may desert at will and may demand half of their earned wages. 2. That a sea-going steam vessel of one-hundred tons or over shall be manned by a crew of whom not less than seventy-five per cent in each department shall be able to understand the language of their officers. 3. That the deck crew shall be composed in the first year after the passage of the law of forty per cent of rated able seamen, in the second year of forty-five per cent, in the third of fifty-five per cent, and thereafter of sixty-five per cent, exclusive of officers and "apprentices." 4. That able sea-

men shall be rated as such only after three years service at sea and upon certification of this service and of their physical capacity by the Department of Commerce. 5. That a passenger-carrying steamer navigating more than twenty miles off shore shall carry boats in davits capable of accommodating not less than seventy-five per cent of its company and other boats or pontoons or rafts capable of accommodating the remainder. 6. That such boats shall be manned by certified "lifeboatmen" as one to twenty-five persons or less, two up to forty-six, three up to sixty, four up to eighty-five, five up to one hundred and ten, six up to one hundred and sixty, seven up to two hundred and ten and one additional for every fifty persons in excess of two hundred and ten. 7. That a sailor's daily allotment of water shall be increased from four to five quarts and butter from one to two ounces.

This last provision in itself is sufficient commentary on the food scale that had theretofore existed in American vessels. To give the first-cited provision effect

a century-old law which prevented a sailor from jumping a ship in a foreign port had to be repealed and reciprocal treaties predicated upon that law, which is universal, are in process of denouncement. It was argued by the sponsors of the seamen's act that the results would be: 1. Wholesale desertions from foreign ships in American ports due to the attraction of higher wages. 2. An automatic lifting of the wage scale to the American level. 3. The establishment of a competitive labor parity as between American and foreign vessels.

A weird bit of reasoning is that, taking no account of the fact that citizenship in other nations imposes upon individuals quite as much, if not more, responsibility to the state than does American citizenship, nor yet taking account of the immigration laws and exclusion policy of the United States. The fallacy of this provision, however, does not lessen its mischievousness.

The United States may abrogate its

own laws of contract, but it cannot abrogate those of other nations. We can refuse to arrest Caucasian deserters from foreign ships, but we cannot sustain a libel for a deserting sailor's wages in the face of a contract signed abroad, providing that he shall not be paid off except upon the option of consul or master or until he shall have returned to a home port or the port of departure.

Assume a British or German or French deserter returning in an American ship to a home port and the jurisdiction of his national laws. Certainly no sane person would contend that the United States could or can prevent the imposition of any penalty that the deserter's government may choose to visit upon him.

There will be no more Caucasian desertions in American ports than there have ever been. The presumption seems tenable that foreign nations will take steps to make the number less. But everything else aside, if the law should bring about all its sponsors claim for

the desertion provision American shipping would not benefit. Our ships are limited to employ only English-speaking sailors.

As for non-Caucasian desertions, there will be none. Our Oriental-exclusion policy seizes the Mongolian and lascar crews to the British vessels that they navigate in and out of our ports whether they will or will not. And Great Britain will be the one to decide whether British subjects shall be excluded from employment in British vessels, not the United States. But assuming for the sake of the argument that she should submit to the application of the language test prescribed by the La Follette-Alexander Act. All that it would be necessary to do then would be to certify the serangs and bos'ns that work the Chinese and lascar crews as mates. Under the strictest interpretation at the present time they are officers.

The desertion-prohibiting law that was repealed — the “involuntary servitude”



statute as it pleases the promoters of the La Follette-Alexander legislation to call it — was wrought in wisdom. The reasons that underlay it are worth understanding. It was enacted not in behalf of the masters of vessels, nor of seamen, nor of ships, nor of owners, but in the just interest of all. It was a master's assurance against the desertion of a crew in a foreign port where other sea labor was unobtainable; it was a seaman's assurance against being beached because of a master's whim or parsimony or because the master could ship men at a smaller wage — a sailor's inviolable guaranty from government that a vessel must bring him back from the ends of the earth to the port of departure or another port in the United States; it was a vessel's assurance that she would not be left helpless; it was an owner's assurance that his property would be reasonably safeguarded at all times and that he would be permitted to perform his legal contracts.

The provision requiring that not less than seventy-five per cent of each department of a steamer's crew shall understand the language of their officers was what struck the flag in the Pacific.

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company lasted as long as it did because, in the matter of labor at least, it was able to meet the competition of the subsidized Japanese lines through the employment of Chinese deck, fire room and steward's department crews. To have attempted to continue its service to the Philippines, China and Japan would have cost it \$500,000 a year. And in addition to competing with the Japanese lines the United States Army Transport service had been its business rival ever since our occupation of the Philippines.

Opportunely the Trans-Atlantic trade provided purchasers for the Pacific Mail fleet and the officers of the company sold the ships. It would have been no less than a criminal breach of trust for the directors of that corporation not to

have taken advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to clear their stockholders of a slaughtered investment.

It is contended by certain Administration defenders that the Pacific Mail quit because of pique at its exclusion as a railroad-controlled corporation from trafficking through the Panama Canal! Assuming pique then to be an attribute of American business, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company should have stopped running transcontinental passenger trains and the Standard Oil Company should have wound up its affairs when the Government ordered it to resolve itself into fifty component parts, more or less.

But still other defenders of the Administration contend that if the Pacific Mail had only held on the Department of Commerce would have applied the law with a light hand. A light hand! Since when has the Government of the United States become a Government of men and not of laws?

The Seaman's Act is a law of the land, and it should be enforced, and not, as has been the case since November, left to official whim to say that this or that obnoxious provision shall be a dead letter or again that any one of a half-dozen particular penalties shall not be imposed.

When demagogues proposed to the British Board of Trade in 1905 that it should adopt such a commerce-destroying act as "the seventy-five per cent language" provision, how differently they were met! This is the British law, taken from the Merchant Shipping Act of 1906:

"Foreign Seamen. — After December 31st, 1907, a seaman is not to be engaged on board any British ship *at any port in the British Islands* or on the Continent of Europe, *between the River Elbe and Brest inclusive*, - unless he satisfies the superintendent or other officer before whom he is engaged that he possesses a *sufficient knowledge* of the English language to understand the necessary orders

which may be given to him in the course of the performance of his duties. The section does not apply *to any British subject or inhabitant of a British protectorate (meaning the Chinese and Hong Kong) or to any lascar.*"

Therein is written protection of home labor and protection of foreign commerce.

The certification of "able seaman," prescribed in the fourth provision, is a labor union limitation of the supply of labor. It does not take three years nor one to produce the sailor of these times. The physical test is a farce. The writer knows of one case, among others, in which the Government has refused a certificate of physical capacity to a man lacking a thumb. And this man is a sailor of twenty-five years' experience, one of the best equipped bos'n's that ever put foot on a ship's deck. Incidentally he lost his thumb helping to save a vessel to her owners.

As to the lifeboatman provision and the manning of the lifeboat equipment

the requirements are excessive, beyond all the practice of experience and the decision of The International Convention for Safety. These requirements are not applicable to the ships of our principal foreign competitors because of reciprocal agreements concerning passenger-carrying tonnage. Nevertheless American shipping must bear this additional burden.

A British ministry that would enact any law as inimical to its national commerce as the La Follette-Alexander legislation, might just as well resign. A Board of Trade that would tolerate the driving out of business of a British steamship corporation corresponding in size and importance to the Pacific Mail would be drummed out of office.

## CHAPTER XXIV

*These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar among thy merchandise.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 24.

**N**OW for a glimpse of what the other principal maritime nations have been doing while Americans have been playing the part of a banderlog people.

At the outbreak of the war the steam tonnage of the world stood divided among the merchants marine of the belligerents as follows :

NATION	NUMBER OF VESSELS	GROSS TONNAGE
Britain and British Colonies . . . . .	10,123	20,523,706
Germany . . . . .	2,090	5,134,720
France . . . . .	1,025	1,922,286
Italy . . . . .	637	1,430,475
Japan . . . . .	1,103	1,078,386
Austria-Hungary . .	433	1,052,346
Russia . . . . .	747	851,949
Belgium . . . . .	173	341,025



Approximately those eight nations controlled seventy-two per cent of the world's ocean-carrying capacity.

Since 1872 the British Admiralty has paid subventions or bounties to ships constructed upon lines making them upon occasion instantly convertible into naval auxiliaries and troopers. The payment of postal subsidies has known no lapse since the beginning in 1840. On only her most unimportant trade routes does she pay for mail carriage by weight or for actual service rendered.

When the United States retired from the North Atlantic in 1860 she reduced the amount of the Cunard grant. In 1871, apprehending our return as a competitor through the establishment of a line out of Philadelphia by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, she increased payments generally. In order to keep the Cunard wholly and essentially British in ownership at the time of the American International Mercantile Marine Company merger in 1903 she

granted that corporation a fixed subsidy of \$750,000 a year in lieu of the Admiralty subvention of \$75,000 a year and mail payments. When Germany challenged her supremacy in the Trans-Atlantic trade and captured the world's speed laurels with the first of her big greyhounds, she lent the Cunard Company \$13,000,000 to build the *Mauretania* and the late *Lusitania*, charging it only two and three quarters per cent interest per annum, the loan to be repaid in installments covering a period of twenty years. Canada and Australia grant mail subsidies and Canada fishing bounties.

The subventioned and postal subsidized tonnage of Great Britain represents no more than one third of her wonderful merchant marine; the remainder — the fat-bellied cargo ships that carry the bulk of the earth's commerce — receives no state aid of any kind.

The British home government's disbursements in 1912-1913 for postal sub-

sidies, including sea-sorting mail accommodations, amounted to only \$3,354,270.

Austria pays from one to two dollars a ton a year on the gross measurement of new ships for the first four years of their life, less five per cent from the fifth to the tenth year and less ten per cent thereafter. In addition she pays a two-cents-a-mile voyage subsidy on net tonnage covering distance in excess of one hundred miles, and a building subsidy of about eight dollars a gross ton on hulls and a dollar and a half on machinery if fifty per cent of the material in each case is of domestic origin.

Belgium pays no postal subsidies, her mail steamers being owned by the government. She has made public loans to steamship concerns at a three per cent rate. Up to the opening of the war her colonial department had an agreement with the Congo line to protect it in so far as guaranteeing the shipment of all Government stores and passengers exclusively in its vessels.

France inaugurated state aid in 1881. She restricts her home coast trade and traffic with Algeria to French ships. She pays approximately an average of \$11,000,000 a year for postal services. From 1881 to 1893 she expended in round figures \$24,000,000 on navigation and construction bounties; from 1893 to 1901 \$26,000,000; from 1901 to 1911 nearly \$78,000,000 and for postal services nearly \$59,000,000. No nation in history has ever paid so much to produce and maintain a merchant marine and obtained less. She has been able to purchase for herself third place in world rank. While one may love France and her people ever so devotedly, he is compelled to admit that they have no sea genius. They are not blood heritors of Tyre.

Germany pays postal subsidies. Up to 1914 she was paying the German East Africa and the Norddeutscher Lloyd lines \$1,750,000 a year. In addition she paid the Norddeutscher Lloyd and Hamburg-American lines for "actual mail

services rendered." The German East Africa and the German Levant lines received commercial bounties through the reduction of railway rates on goods originating in Germany and destined for transportation in their ships, and a similar advantage accrued if the goods were consigned to points on the Turkish and Bulgarian railway systems. Immediately before the war Germany rescinded a grant of \$475,000 which she had been paying her East Asia and Australia mail lines.

Italy admits all shipbuilding material free of duty and pays repair and construction bounties, the last amounting to ten dollars and fifty cents a gross ton, with a varying scale of additional premiums determined by whether a vessel is fitted with reciprocating engines or turbines. In 1912 Italy disbursed \$1,250,000 in shipbuilding bounties.

Japan ranks next to France in the amount of direct subsidies to shipping. In 1911 she spent \$7,000,000 plus, of

which approximately \$5,000,000 was for the extension of steamship routes, \$800,000 for the encouragement of navigation and \$575,000 for the exhilaration of shipbuilding. In addition Japan restricts her coasting trade to native tonnage.

Russia pays direct subsidies and just before the war granted two loans, without interest, to establish a Far Eastern steamship service. Those loans were arranged as to repayment like that of the British Government to the Cunard Company. Under a law of July, 1912, Russia arranged to pay a shipbuilding bounty of about \$126,000 on steamers of 3000 tons and one thousand indicated horsepower, and regardless of whether the materials were imported or of home origin. Foreign shipbuilding materials are admitted free of duty.

Spain in 1909 quit the payment of direct subsidies and adopted a voyage system of aid — from six and a half to nine and a half cents a gross ton for

each one thousand miles, provided the entire crew is Spanish, that Spanish mails are carried free and that three fifths of fifty per cent of a vessel's maximum carrying capacity consists of Spanish export products. Spain also grants ship-building bounties, ranging from thirty dollars and sixteen cents a gross ton for iron and steel cargo steamers to thirty-four dollars for passenger ships. This is exclusive of a ten per cent speed premium added for every knot a new vessel attains in excess of fourteen.

Brazil pays approximately \$1,500,000 a year in postal subsidies, the principal beneficiary being the Lloyd Brasileiro.

Norway's subsidy expenditures up to the beginning of 1916 amounted to about \$450,000 a year. Since then she has made a grant of \$195,000 a year to establish a line between New York and her principal ports.

With the exception of Britain the United States has nothing to learn from the experience of any of the other nations unless it may be what not to do.



## CHAPTER XXV

*In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall. The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror and never shalt be any more.*

— EZEKIEL 27 : 34, 36.

**T**O have and to hold a merchant marine commensurate with the independence of American commerce and communications is a question which ranks with that of military preparedness in the necessity of immediate settlement by the people of the United States.

Reduced to a few words, the four principal factors that contributed to the striking of the American flag on deep water from 1865 to 1914 were: 1. The inability of the United States to build iron and steel vessels as cheaply as foreign nations, particularly Great Brit-

ain. 2. The inability of shipowners, under a continuous and inelastic protective system, to build abroad or, having built in this country, to operate their higher costing vessels profitably in competition with foreign nations of lower living standards. 3. The unfamiliarity of the American people as a whole, because of the diversity and competition of their interests and their geographical distribution, with the national necessity or the advantages of maintaining a merchant marine. 4. A *laissez-faire* political policy, satisfied if the ships of other nations were willing and ready to carry our commerce more cheaply than American vessels to let them do it.

Overnight, one may say, the war upset the first three factors and they have continued upset, except as the La Follette-Alexander seamen's law prohibits operation in the Trans-Pacific trades. For the first time since 1860 American shipbuilding yards are constructing commercial deep-sea tonnage. And the war

is compelling not only American owners, but foreigners as well, to employ them.

Under a constant and increasing demand the shipbuilding industry in the United States is expanding; new yards are being founded along both seaboard. The law of supply and demand reigns supreme and is dictating prices in keeping with the world's tonnage necessities. But present abnormal earnings are important to this analysis only in so far as they are enabling pre-war yards and plants to absorb the excessive overhead charges piled up by the long years of paucity and as they will enable new yardage to obtain a flying start.

The times are arming the American shipbuilding industry against the days when peace shall have come and competition is restored. Labor is being trained, equipment standardized, proficiency in duplication of types attained, patents acquired, organization effected. Material cost for years has been a negligible differential in Britain's favor. The free

importation law of 1909 was as unnecessary as a lot of other banderlog legislation that preceded it. Material then was purchasable as cheaply on the banks of the Delaware as on the banks of the Clyde. In 1913 the Delaware could buy steel under the Clyde.

Providing that the maritime policy of the United States does not hamstring our shipbuilders meanwhile they will be in a position upon the inception of normal conditions to construct as cheaply as Britain. And this is taking into account the pre-war difference between the cost of American and British labor. Still there is a splendidly equipped school of opinion that holds that the wage differential will never be again what it was in the past, once Britain at peace comes to tally the losses of Britain at war.

And what is true of Britain also may be accepted as applying to her allies and her adversaries. The war piper is not paid while the dance is on, but afterward,

in the years of peace. Labor will be scarcer, taxes will be higher and wages will rise to a corresponding level. British shipping, going on a year, has been paying a fifty per cent income tax. How much of this peace will see retained no one can tell, but it is unlikely that the charge will be entirely wiped out for many years. After the Civil War American shipping had to pay taxes through the nose in keeping with all other industries. But the other industries were protected and shipping was not and high taxation was one of the big factors in piling up the operating differential against us.

On an assumption that higher taxation and higher labor charges will not bring the foreigner's operating cost up to our level, then let the United States take necessity for its pilot and reduce taxation on American shipping investments. We may not under our treaties discriminate in charges or the remission of duties, but there is nothing to prevent us from put-

ting our foreign commerce shipping securities on an untaxable parity with federal, state and municipal bonds. There is much food for thought in this suggestion.

But putting aside all of these considerations so far as they apply to the shipbuilding industry alone and assuming a continuous demand upon our yards, we should be able to construct vessels on an equality with or at an advantage over any competitor. If we can outsell the world in steel bridges and locomotives, we can outsell it in ships. The ship of to-day is not more than a plated steel bridge with a locomotive inside of it.

It must be remembered at all times that the capacity to own ships can never be greater than the capacity to build them. A merchant marine is more than just a fleet of vessels. It must have yards standing behind it ever ready to repair it, ever ready to renew its volume. If it is to be made competitively impossible for Americans to own and oper-

ate tonnage, then it is going to be economically impossible for a shipbuilding industry to maintain itself.

And a thought to hold is this: Britain keeps the sea to-day through the capacity of her private shipbuilding yards and because of those yards she will issue from this war still the British Empire.

In our hour of stress it will be our private yards and not our navy yards that will keep our battle fleets afloat.



## CHAPTER XXVI

*Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones; they shall sit upon the ground and shall tremble at every moment and be astonished at thee.*

— EZEKIEL 26 : 16.

**F**ORTHWITH the Congress of the United States should do two things :

1. Repeal the La Follette-Alexander seamen's law and restore the *status quo ante bellum*. 2. Create a separate department of government to be known as the department of marine and to be administered by a commission or board of five or seven experts similar in organization to the maritime branch of the British Board of Trade.

It is as certain as the sun is in the heavens that if the seamen's law is not repealed, it will drive to alien flags, the moment peace is declared, all the tonnage we have acquired since the beginning of

the war and whatever shall come to our registry for the advantage of neutrality during the remainder of the period of hostilities. And should the idea of government ownership of merchant ships prevail, it will matter not whether it is repealed. The result will be the same. Capital will not compete with Government.

It has been proposed by others that the Congress should authorize the President to suspend whatever provisions of the seamen's law shall be shown to be inequitable and detrimental to the best interests of American shipping. But this is a case for a surgeon and not a physician. A knife, not an opiate, is the remedy.

The Government ownership proposition is urged by men who argue that because private enterprise since 1865 has failed to produce a merchant marine, Government should now become the god in the machine. And they contend that, in the face of a record of legislative pig-headedness that is without parallel in the

history or the experience of any other modern nation !

Still it remains for them to explain how they would apportion their Government-owned tonnage equitably among the divers classes of American commerce. Would the importer, who always pays the freight, be favored, or would the exporter, who, under the economic rule of things, never pays, be the privileged one? Nor has it been demonstrated how fifty million dollars' worth of ships — this is the proposed limitation of the Government investment — is going to accommodate four and a half billion dollars' worth of business. Washington has yet to be revealed as the abode of any one capable of repeating the miracle of the loaves and the fishes.

The suggestion as to the creation of a department of marine is not original with the author any more than it is with the Government ownership servers, who included it as the administrative power in the legislation proposed in September,

1914. In the Alexander bill, however, it was called a shipping board. The idea was first proposed by Bernard Nadal Baker in an article in the *North American Review*, of January, 1910. And Mr. Baker's inspiration was the successful experience of British administration through a similar organization.

The Marine Department of the Board of Trade of Great Britain is the godhead of the empire's shipping. There is no other authority. And as it propoundeth the law, so Britain's owners and mariners and, too, the foreigners trafficking in and out of British ports, obey it. Its officials are permanent. The laws which it administers are codified and known as The Merchant Shipping Act. No amendment to this act is considered by Parliament unless upon the advice and with the assent of the Board of Trade. There is no possibility of a change of policy overnight placing British investments in sea property in the limbo with wildcat mining schemes. The British public

knows this and so the British public invests in British shipping. Capital is protected and labor is protected.

The Congress should create such a board or department as that, empowering it to at once take over the functions of maritime administration from the half-dozen branches of Government which now divide it, and, with all of the facts of the problem and our necessities in view, to formulate a policy and draft a shipping code. And having done that, the Congress should proceed to act upon the advice of these experts toward the nation's greatest vantage. The best thought of the land indorses such a course.

In all of the proposals that have been put forth in favor of the creation of a marine department upon the lines indicated there is agreement that the members of the administrative board or commission should be appointed by the President, with the concurrence of the Senate. Some have suggested seven mem-

bers, with Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Commerce as members *ex officio*, and others five, with one or both of those cabinet officers related similarly. In addition the chief of the navy general staff (to be created some day) should be a member *ex officio*. But it should be provided specifically that neither he nor the two cabinet officers should have a vote. It perhaps would be advisable that the chairman of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries should be a member *ex officio*, but also excluded from voting. The hands of the commission or board must be free.

The proposal to create a department of marine presupposes on the part of the appointing power a selection of men of national reputation in commerce and shipping and labor — men bigger than any class — men as big as the task to be performed — men who know the difference between the deep-sea and coast-wise traffic and the soul of each — men who understand that the oceans are

free to all nations and will continue so to the end untrammelled by any man-made laws — men who respect the rights of other peoples and the sacredness of treaties and contracts, and above all, Americans not ashamed to be known as patriots in a time when patriotism is hardly less than a characterization of scorn.

We must have a plan in order to build intelligently, and the only possible way to obtain one is from such an organization of experts as has been indicated. Individually we would not think of putting to sea without a chart or a compass nor of erecting a house without the blue prints and drawings of an architect for guidance. And yet we collectively, as one of the world's great nations, are contemplating the creation of a merchant marine with naught but a hodge-podge knowledge of inexperienced minds to direct us!

The time has come to cease playing the part of a banderlog people. We



boast of our greatness and our commerce, and yet south of Panama a Bank of England note is worth more than our gold. We boast that we opened the door of China and we did, but China hasn't seen us since. Nor does she understand why our ships go not to her ports. We opened the door of Japan and to-day we must cross the Pacific in her ships and float our commerce under her flag. We are domiciled in the Philippines, but Japan exploits their trade. We own Hawaii and it is an outpost of the Orient. Porto Rico belongs to us and still dreams of Spain. The average man in the street doesn't know whether the island is governed by a warrant or a legislature. South America would do business with us, but for years all we have had the grace to say to her has been, "Go to hell." We proclaim a Monroe doctrine and permit Mexico to invite the world to challenge it. We prate of peace and goodwill toward all mankind and with only our shirt-

sleeve diplomacy for armament go about inviting war.

We revolutionized the science of ship-building, created steam navigation and screw propulsion and we have no merchant marine. We invented the ironclad and we rank fourth among the navies of the world. Our genius bore the heavier than air machine and Turkey can teach us how to fly. Yankee brains contrived the machine gun and the American army stands unequipped to hold a three-mile front.

In 1898 the United States had to rake and scrape through the fleets of the world for transports and naval auxiliaries, and we were able to purchase them simply because Spain was not strong enough to protest. In 1907, when the first-line flower of the navy circled the world, the country's merchant marine could not provide a sufficient consort to coal it. Fifty odd foreigners had to be chartered to serve that fleet. As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so those

sixteen battleships were no stronger than the dependability of their consorts. If at any time during the period of that round-the-world cruise war had been declared on the United States, those alien colliers would have become automatically, under international law, either belligerents or neutrals.

Eighteen years have passed since the Spanish altercation and nine since the battleship excursion round the globe, and if to-morrow were to present either necessity again, it would find us no better prepared.

The transports that were purchased in 1898 should have been scrapped long ago. If a private concern owned them, they would have been. It is boasted by Government that in 1914 these vessels saved \$300,000 over what it would have cost to perform the same service by patronizing private American ships. But Britain makes no such boast. She employs her merchant marine to do her trooping and her carrying and her

colliering and between her occasions the commerce of the earth maintains them.

We need scouts and troopers and colliers. To obtain *Mauretania*s and *Aquitania*s the United States must be prepared to pay as Britain has paid, calling the price by any name one will, subsidy, subvention, grant or bounty, but paying it. To have troopers and colliers the United States must make it possible for them to live in their respective trades of peace against the day it shall suddenly need them. We must be willing to make any sacrifice.

And above all a call must be sounded that will draw Americans back to the sea. And it must be the call of the whole people, not the specious call of a class. Provision must be made to absorb in the merchant marine some of the four thousand men who each year are discharged from the navy. Therein lies a constant source of new blood — a veritable fountain of young men of incomparable preparation and discipline

for commercial sea pursuits. Their service with the colors should be permitted to count as a weight in examinations for bridge and engine-room certificates and they should be given preference of employment as quartermasters and petty officers on all mail lines and in other deck and engine-room positions on lines admitting of such employment.

The question is one presenting a thousand angles of approach. It is going to take time and bigness and patience and the interest of the whole people to even approximate a settlement — forbearance by labor and forbearance by capital. What we have been destroying through fifty years we cannot rebuild in an hour. In view of history and all the facts of our national experience neither statement nor argument should be required to demonstrate further that the destiny of the United States is inseparable from the sea. We are committed to the use of the oceans which are our boundaries by all the factors in the scheme of civili-

zation — committed geographically, politically, commercially, socially and by the military necessities and the instinct of self-preservation.

We cannot longer deny these commitments — this precious heritage of Tyre — and hope to survive as a power of influence in the affairs of the world. We must in the advantageous moment that has been thrust upon us either determine to seize our estate in the deep waters, once and for all, or else prepare to offer a blood sacrifice and pay a penalty to which, in comparison, the exactions since August, 1914, will be as a farthing tithe.

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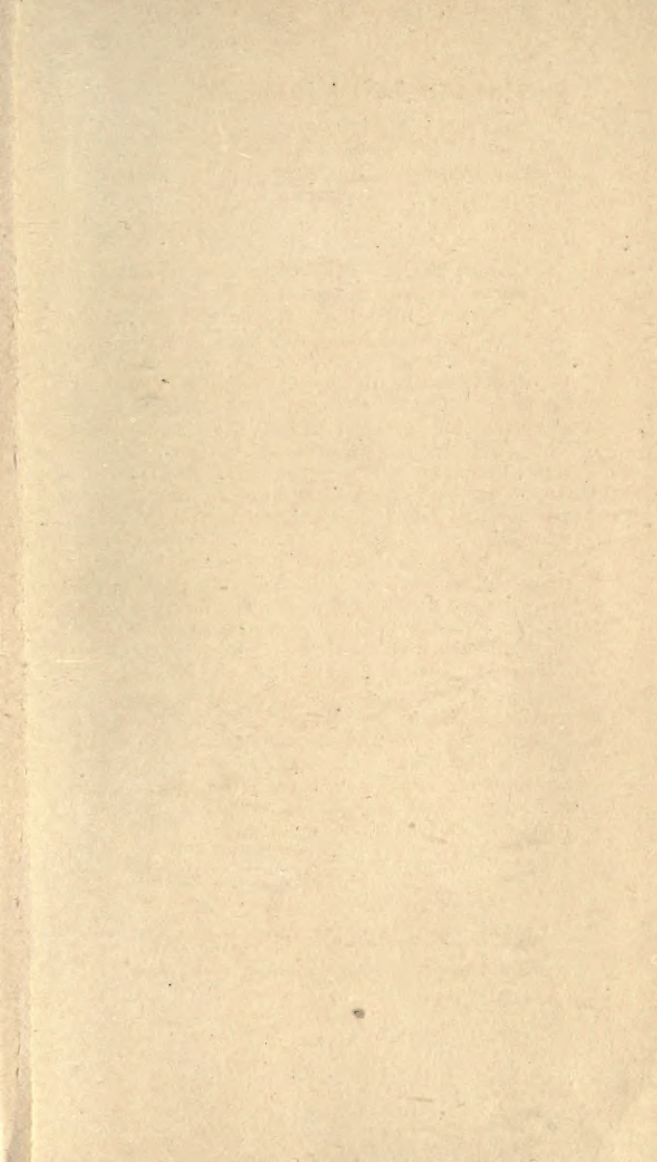
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